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BIHĀRĪ  

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THE SATASĀĪ





## THE SATASAI

Bihārī's date of birth and caste are shrouded in controversy, though his position as one of the foremost poets of the Rītikāla tradition (also called Śṛṅgārakāla tradition) of love poetry has never been in dispute.

Bihārī was probably born in 1595 in Gwalior to Keśavarāya and Mahāvidyā—a family of Gharawārī Mathura Caubeys, a Brahmin sub-caste. He got his early education from his father who was a Sanskrit scholar. When he was about eight years of age his mother died and the family moved to Ōrchā in Bundelkhaṇḍ after which they went to Vṛṇḍāvana. At around this time Bihārī married and shifted to Mathurā with his wife. When Emperor Jehāngīr visited Mathurā with his son Shāh Jahān, the latter invited Bihārī to the Moghul court at Agra; Bihārī recited some of his poems there and was awarded an annuity by the princes present in recognition of his talents. During the political unrest after Jehāngīr's death Bihārī returned to Mathurā.

He was then invited to Amber by its ruler to his court. It was here, under Jayasingha's patronage, that Bihārī wrote *The Satasai*. After his wife's death Bihārī returned to Vṛṇḍāvana, where he spent his last days of his life. He died in 1664 at the age of sixty-nine.

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# BIHĀRĪ

## The Satasaī

*Translated from the Hindi and  
with an introduction by  
Krishna P. Bahadur*

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*To Sandhya*

*Alas, that Spring should vanish with the Rose!  
That Youth's sweet-scented Manuscript should close.*

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Omar Khyyām (Trans. Edward Fitzgerald)



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*Bihārī Bhāṣya*, Dr Deśarājasingha Bhāṭī, Delhi: Aśoka Prakāśan, 1978. (Hindi)

*Bihārī-Bodhini*, Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna 'Dīna', Banāras: Sāhitya-Sevā-Sadan, 1978. (Hindi)

*Bihārī-Satasaī*, Śrī Rākeśa, Lucknow: Prakāśan Kendra. (Hindi)

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Sources cited are referred to in the notes at the end of the book. Verses which bear no such source reference are the author's own translation.

# INTRODUCTION

## *Bihārī's Times*

Bihārī was born in an age when the barbarity of conquerors like Mahmūd Ghazni and Tīmūr was spent and the puritanical iconoclasm of Aurangazīb had not yet begun. He also escaped the stormy uncertain years of the early Moghul emperors, Bābur and Humāyūn. Akbar's rule began on 14 February 1556, about thirty-nine years before Bihārī was born, and ended with the emperor's death on 25 October 1605 when the poet was only ten years old. By that time Akbar had consolidated his empire. He had also provided an atmosphere in which even a culture alien to his own, could flourish. By the time Akbar's successor, Jahāngīr, died (7 November 1627), Bihārī was thirty-three. Jahāngīr continued Akbar's liberal policy of universal toleration, having temples and churches built, and observing Hindu fasts as public holidays. But Bihārī's formative years were tied up with Jahāngīr's son and successor, Shāh Jahān, whose period (1628–58) is sometimes called the 'Golden Age' of Moghul history. Bihārī had only six years more to live after Shāh Jahān stepped down to make way for Aurangazīb. Shāh Jahān, the builder of the Tāj Mahal and several other masterpieces of architecture, encouraged music, dance and painting, had Sanskrit works translated into Persian, and patronized Hindu poets.

Naraharidāsa, who was to become Bihārī's spiritual guru, introduced him to Shāh Jahān when he was still a prince. The poet composed some verses in his praise which pleased Shāh Jahān so much that he invited Bihārī to Agra. That gave the poet an opportunity to learn Persian and to get acquainted with other scholars flocking to the Moghul court. Bihārī also became the favourite of Jayasingha, ruler of Amber (near Jaipur) which was to become one of the most prominent states of Rājputāna. It was Jayasingha who encouraged him to write the *Satasai*.



Thus Bihārī came at the right time. Had he been born earlier, perhaps his poetic genius would not have blossomed so freely, for those were years of turmoil, persecution and bloodshed, and not favourable at all to art and culture. In other respects, however, Bihārī's times were not so happy. It was the age of social and spiritual decline. The middle class—merchants, doctors, men of letters and so forth—were almost extinct. There were either the very rich or the very poor; grandeur on one side, misery on the other. 'The peasantry,' says Bernier, a physician of those times, 'was completely crushed.' It was natural under these circumstances, that the vices and extravagance of courts should have been mirrored in the lives of the aristocracy—the class which really mattered—in manners, dress, pastime, food and drink. Abu'l Fazl, the chronicler of the times, tells us that one hundred dishes were served to Akbar at just one meal, and that he wasn't a gourmet! Drinking was quite common and though some of the emperors like, Jahāngīr (himself a drunkard) and Aurangazīb, tried to enforce prohibition, drinking had come to stay. Aurangazīb exclaimed in despair, 'In all Hindustān there can't be found more than two men who don't drink' (meaning himself and his chief *qāzī*, Abu'l Wahāb). And even about his *qāzī* he was wrong, because Manucci, commenting on what the emperor said, wrote, 'He was in error, for I myself sent Abu'l Wahāb a bottle of spirits which he drank in secret!' Women drank too, and some of Bihārī's heroines are shown not only drinking, but drunk.

About the jewellery worn by the ruler of Malabar, Marco Polo says, 'What this king wears between gold and gems and pearls, is worth more than a city's ransom.' Ornaments indeed were a craze, particularly with women. Abu'l Fazl mentions thirty-seven kinds. Complimenting the women for their beauty, Orme, the historian, says, 'Nature seems to have showered beauty on the fairer sex throughout Hindustan with a more lavish hand than in most other countries.' And of course when nature bestowed beauty on Indian women, they took good care to enhance it. They were very particular about their make-up. Eyelids were blackened with lamp-black on their inner edges, lips stained red with betel-juice (which women were fond of chewing), feet and palms with henna and the borders of the sole with lacquer dye. High class ladies

blackened the crevices between their teeth with *missi* and darkened their eyelashes with antimony. Long hair was considered graceful, being often gathered into a bun in which a gold bodkin was stuck. Shoulders and breasts were anointed with a paste of sandalwood powder, camphor and other fragrant unguents. In dress too, women of the upper classes were fastidious. Hindu women wore saris and a small jacket beneath it called the *aṅgiyā*. About the *aṅgiyā*, Stavorinus wrote, 'They support their breasts and press them upwards by a piece of linen which passes under the arms and is made fast on the back.'<sup>1</sup> All these fashions are reflected in Bihārī's women. He rarely speaks of a village girl, and when he does so, the change in dress and ornaments from the ornate to the humble is very much in evidence.

Morals shared the inconsistencies of the age. Akbar noticed that Hindu women were 'flaming torches of love and fellowship'.<sup>2</sup> Jahāngir said they would not 'let the hand of any unlawful person touch the skirt of their chastity'.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand all the ills of a degenerate society were also present—polygamy, prostitution and illicit sex. Although there were wantons among women then, as now (Bihārī mentions a few in his *Satasai*), the fault lay more with the men than with the women. Manucci writes about 'wretched pretenders to holiness who satisfy their lust and avarice'.<sup>4</sup> Speaking of Mohammedans he says, 'They are very fond of women who are their principal relaxation and almost their only pleasure'.<sup>5</sup> There were child-marriages, dowry and widow-burning. Men kept many wives and mistresses. They had secret affairs. Concubines were on the increase. A number of women in the cities took to the veil.

All this was reflected in Bihārī's men and women, known as *nāyakas* and *nāyikās* in Hindi love poetry. Quite a few of the *nāyakas* were faithless to their wives or beloveds and returned from the arms of their mistresses boldly displaying the marks of their nightlong love-making in a devil-may-care manner. Then there was this further complication resulting from polygamy, in that almost every man had more than one wife (the woman being expected to be satisfied, on the contrary, with one husband). The man's affection kept shifting to the newest wife, making the others, her co-wives, naturally jealous.

The same atmosphere of conflict dominated religion also. On the one hand Hindus were willing to admit Muslim converts to their fold, on the other they kept up a stiff resistance and reaffirmed their conservatism. Those Hindus worshipping Viṣṇu were known as Vaiṣṇavas, and those worshipping Śiva, Śaivites. The Vaiṣṇavas predominated northern India and the other sect the south. Then there were the Tāntriks, the most renowned of them being Kṛṣṇānanda Āgamavāgiśa of Navadvīpa, who wrote the *Tantrasāra*. Certain sections of the Tāntriks of the *śakti* cult, however, took to sensual pleasures in the name of religion, while the Aghorapanthis followed all kinds of horrible practices.

A significant development of Vaiṣṇavism was the Kṛṣṇa cult which grew round the love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Jayadeva, the court poet of Lakṣmaṇasena (twelfth century), gave a highly sensual account of this love in his poem, the *Gītagovinda*. An even more erotic narration was given in the *Brahma-Vaivarta Purāṇa*. Caitanya, the mystic saint of India, was also a Kṛṣṇa devotee, but of the spiritual kind. He attached no significance to caste or community, and one of his prominent disciples was a Muslim. There were many Vaiṣṇava saints in the south, for example Rāmānuja, Nimbārka, Mādhava, Vallabha, the Ālvārs and the Kartabhajas. All of them were for the worship of a god with form. Rāma, another incarnation of Viṣṇu, also had worshippers, some of whom like Rāmasakheji considered him as much as Jayadeva conceived of Kṛṣṇa. These devotees were known as *rasikas*.<sup>6</sup>

Of the Śaivites there were the Viraśaivas who believed in the complete union of the soul with god through the power called *śakti*, and the Śaivasiddhāntas who recognized the reality of the world and the plurality of souls. Midway between the monoism of Śankara and the dualism of Rāmānuja, there was Śrīkaṇṭha who believed that *karma* (action) decided a man's fate, but it was subject to god's grace.

The *bhakti* (devotional) movement, which swept over the greater part of India at this time, also found many followers. Some of the *bhakti* sects, like the Rādhāvallabhas, gave Rādhā a position superior to Kṛṣṇa. They believed the only male in the universe was Kṛṣṇa (*puruṣa*), all the others being females (*prakṛtis*). The followers of the

sect imagined they were friends of Rādhā. They put on a woman's dress, took feminine names and behaved like women. Some of them favoured extra-marital love too.

Others of the *bhakti* school, like Rāmānanda, Ravidāsa, Kabir, Jñāneśvara, Nāmadeva, Ekanātha, Tukārāma and Rāmadāsa, most of them being of humble origin, were purely spiritual in their devotion.

The Sūfī Muslims believed in spiritual advancement, mystical ecstasy and public service. Their influence was all for the good. As Barni remarked, 'Vices among men have been reduced by their teachings.' They also tried to bring the Hindus and Mohammedans together. The non-Hindu religions were Islam, the religion of the rulers, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and Zoroastrianism.

Bihārī was a Kṛṣṇa devotee, and therefore, there are some couplets in the *Satasāl* about Kṛṣṇa in his divine aspect. But a majority of them depict him as the *rasika* lover of Rādhā and the milkmaids. Kṛṣṇa is the fickle lover, who can't stick to any one girl, and with whom all of them are enthralled. Rādhā is his favourite, but he can't resist a beautiful woman, and so makes love to all of them in his favourite haunt, the woods on the bank of the Yamunā river.

Bihārī's couplets also mention some of the games and pastimes prevalent then, as, for example polo (*caugāna*), blind-man's buff, chess, and so forth. His acquaintance with Persian and Arabic is reflected in the various words and phrases used, such as *kibalnumā*, *jāma*, *fānūs*, *āb*, *hamām*, *ahasān*, *adab*, *khuśāhāl*, and so forth. His lovers were like the men of those times, pleasure-seekers lusting after girls, capricious, blatantly adulterous and dandies. His women heavily ornamented and gracefully adorned, ever ready to display their charms, slyly amorous, artlessly bashful in adolescence and subtly seductive in youth. They display the same inconsistent nature as of the women of the period, one moment peering secretly at their lover from behind curtains and case-ments, and sometimes throwing all shame to the winds, craftily revealing their limbs, bathing semi-nude, and on occasions even drunk. They seethe with inner fury at the misdemeanours of their lover, but are unable to check their longing. They remain faithful to him, ever ready

to forgive and forget, fearing most his journey abroad which would leave them lonely and sad.

The influence of the court is unmistakable. It had to be. But Bihārī had his dig at those sychophants who managed to get undeserved position, power and wealth by fawning and flattery. His verses depict not only the glamour of court life but also its profligacy.

### ***Life***

As for other Indian writers, a lot of controversy exists about Bihārī's date of birth, his caste, and even about his patron.<sup>1</sup> According to some scholars he was not a Brāhmin as most of his biographers think, but of a mixed caste, a *mūrdhāvaṣika*, i.e., the son of a Kṣatriya mother by a Brāhmin father. But this does not seem to be correct and is apparently due to a misreading of '*dvijarāja kula*' in one of the verses of the *Satasai* (verse 101) on which Grierson comments 'He (Bihārī) tells us himself that he was twice born by caste. . .'<sup>2</sup> The word '*dvijarāja*' means 'twice born' and signifies a Brāhmin, for, according to a legend, Brāhmins were created from the mouth of Puruṣa, apart from their natural human birth. It does not mean, as Grierson seems to think, 'born of parents of two different castes'. Besides, it is doubtful if this particular verse refers to Bihārī at all, for most commentators have taken it as meant for Kṛṣṇa.

Bihārī was born in Gwalior in 1595 in a family of Gharawārī Mathura Caubeys, a sub-caste of the Brāhmins. His father's name was Keśavarāya and his mother's Mahāvidyā. Bihārī got a good education for his father was a scholar of Sanskrit and himself taught the language to the boy.

In 1602-03, after Mahāvidyā's death, the family moved to Orchā, a state in Bundelakhāṇḍ, whose ruler, Indrajit, a cultured man, patronized art and literature. Here Bihārī met the renowned poet, Keśavadāsa, and visited Naraharidāsa, a Vaiṣṇava savant, who lived in the village of Guḍau by the Dhasāna river. Soon, however, many of the poets and scholars frequenting Indrajit's court, left, and Keśavarāya too departed

for the Braja country (Vṛndāvana), along with Bihārī. There Bihārī met Sarasdeva, Naraharidāsa's guru, and made the acquaintance of a number of Vaiṣṇava devotees and poets.

About this time Bihārī married a girl belonging to a Caubey family of Mathurā. After his marriage, force of circumstances compelled him to live with his in-laws at Mathurā. Bihārī's father stayed on in Vṛndāvana. The *Tuzuk-i-Jahāngirī* mentions that in 1618 the emperor Jahāngir visited Mathurā and met a saint of the name of Cindrarūpa. Quite possibly prince Shāh Jahān, the emperor's son and future successor, came along too and met Naraharidāsa who was also there. Bihārī, who was close to Naraharidāsa, was introduced to the prince. According to Ratnākara, the poet recited some verses which pleased Shāh Jahān, and the prince invited him to Agra, the Moghul capital.

At Agra, Bihārī made the acquaintance of poets, artists, musicians and scholars who thronged the Moghul court, among them the illustrious poet Nawāb Abdur Rahīm Khānakhānā. When a son was born to Shāh Jahān, there was the usual royal celebration to which a number of princes were invited (fifty-two according to Ratnākara). Bihārī recited some of his poems in this august assembly and in recognition of his talents got an annuity from the princes. This assured the poet of a steady income. From 1621 to the year of Shāh Jahān's coronation in 1628, there was great political unrest, and the prince had to leave Agra. Consequently, Bihārī's connection with the Moghul court was severed and he began to live at Mathurā again, though it is possible he paid occasional visits to Agra as well. During these years he also went round to collect the annuities the various rulers had granted him. Shāh Jahān's coronation must have been hailed joyfully by Bihārī, for he already had the new emperor's favour. It is quite likely he paid a few visits to Agra to renew his connections with the court.

One of the princes who had promised Bihārī an annuity was Jayasingha of Amber, an ambitious ruler who kept on the right side of the Moghuls and proved to be of great service to them. When Bihārī went to Amber to collect his annuity he found Jayasingha so helplessly enamoured of a young girl that he gave her all his time and neglected his duties of state. His chief queen, Anaṅta Kumārī, known as Cauhānī



Rānī felt equally neglected. The harried ministers thought Bihārī's coming a good augury, for he was a man who counted, as well as a talented poet. So they approached him for setting things right. Bihārī did the trick by writing a couplet (verse 38) and having it introduced surreptitiously into the rajah's bedroom. That made Jayasingha realize his fault, and he turned his attention to state matters. He also became Bihārī's enthusiastic patron and promised to give him a gold coin (*aśarfi*) for each couplet the poet composed.<sup>3</sup> The grateful queen appointed Bihārī poet of her chamber and made a grant to him of the village of Kālī Pahāḍī. Bihārī was tempted. The revenues of the village would yield him a steady income, and he would be assured of a generous reward for his labours. He decided to stay on in Amber along with his wife. But he had no son of his own, and adopted his nephew, Nirañjana Kṛṣṇa. When a son was born to Jayasingha, Bihārī was entrusted with his education.

While at Amber, Bihārī wrote the *Satasaī* which he had begun at Jayasingha's bidding. According to Ratnakāra, the work was most probably completed by the poet in 1647 and contained seven hundred odd couplets. Some time after the work had been finished, Bihārī's wife died. That caused him a great shock and he decided to leave Amber where he had spent the formative years of his life. He made a round of the various states from where he had to collect his annuity, and returned to his guru, Naraharidāsa at Vṛndāvana, where he spent the last days of his life. He died peacefully in 1664 at the age of sixty-nine.

### *The Rītikāla Tradition and Love in Bihārī's Poetry*

The later medieval period of Hindi poetry (seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) was that of the *rītikāla* poets (also called *śṛṅgāra-kāla*, from *śṛṅgāra* meaning 'love' and *kāla* meaning 'age'). The poets of this period, of whom Bihārī was one, wrote mainly about love in all its aspects. Hindi poets of this period termed the lover as a *nāyaka* (literally 'an eminent person'), and the loved woman as a *nāyikā*

(literally 'a beautiful woman'). But they made many minute classifications of the *nāyakas* and *nāyikās* they wrote about, particularly of the *nāyikās*. These were mainly on the basis of the woman's nature, condition and intensity of her passion. The poet Keśavadāsa mentions eight kinds of *nāyikās* and Bharatamuni fourteen. Broadly speaking, they were classified under three main heads, the *svakīyā*, the *parakīyā* and the *veśyā* or *sādhārāṇī*. Their characteristics were mentioned as follows:

- (i) The *svakīyā* was the highest type of womanhood, sharing the yearnings, inclinations, pleasures and sorrows of her lover. She was spontaneously ready for love-making and had no fear of public censure because she observed all the social conventions in her love relations.
- (ii) The *parakīyā*, on the contrary, had fear of being censured because she was unconventional. If a man loved a married woman who was not his own wife, that woman was called a *parakīyā*. Clearly the *parakīyā*'s love was illicit, and the stronger her longing the greater was bound to be her fear of wagging tongues. Of the *parakīyās* there were two kinds—the *kanyā* who was younger, less experienced and more secretive about her love, and the *prauṭhā* who was older, adept in love-making, lustful and shameless, and carried on openly with her lover, caring little for what people might say. It wouldn't be wrong to call her a wanton.
- (iii) The *veśyā* was practically a prostitute or a courtesan. She was available to any man who could spend money on her, and she was unmindful of all criticism.

Other *ritikāla* poets like Sūr, Naṇḍadāsa, Kṛpārāma, Rahīm and Ghaṇānāṇḍa, had still more minute distinctions. These were on the basis of intensity of love, qualities, and moods. According to the intensity of love, women were classified as *jyeṣṭhā* and *kaniṣṭhā*, i.e., the former having intense love and the *kaniṣṭhā* kind somewhat less. On the basis of qualities the classification was three-fold, namely *uttama*, *madhyama* and *adhama* (good, middling and low). From the aspect of mood there were as many as eight kinds of *nāyikās*. It is beyond the scope of this brief introduction to go into the details of the characteristics of each of these.<sup>1</sup>

The *nāyakas* were not given much importance inasmuch as we do not find such a detailed classification of them in Hindi love poetry. The poet Keśavadāsa mentions just four types, viz. the agreeable, the dexterous, the deceitful and the brazen.

Bihāri exploited almost all the types of *nāyakas* and *nāyikās*, and followed the traditional divisions.

*Ritikāla* poetry was a departure from the devotional one which had become popular from the mid-fifteenth century to the mid-seventeenth, and of which Tulsi, Sūr, Kabir and Mirā were exponents. The *ritikāla* poets turned from the spiritual to the sensuous, from introspection to the pursuit of external beauty. It was not a break from the past, but rather a transformation of it. The love they wrote about was sublime, not coarse. Very few of their women were wantons. They glanced shyly at their lovers from behind casement windows. Very little of their love-making was narrated in all its details. It was suggestive and symbolic. The art of the *ritikāla* poets, however, was not only circumscribed—though within that limit they were superb—it was also short-lived. Spiritualism had been the soul of Indian culture right from the *Vedas*. To transform the spiritualist into the voluptuary was as vain as to erase an indelible ink mark. The *ritikāla* poets wrote in a characteristically ornate style, putting the entire battery of embellishment, figures of speech, metrical variations, rhetoric and poetic artifice to their task. But while they charmed the minds of their readers they could not tug at their heartstrings. In this the *bhakti* poets held their ground. So the *ritikāla* poets had to bring in Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa to sanctify their sensuality. That was not difficult, for Jayadeva's *Gītagovinda* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* gave them a ready-made background.

The *ritikāla* poets are often criticized for being too sensual, sometimes even bordering on the obscene. That may be true for a few stray verses, but by and large they weren't. They were of course bound by their subject and wrote about the myriad aspects of love-making. But they remained within the bounds of decency. They refrained from writing about making love that seemed salacious. The *ritikāla* poets depicted a Victorian restraint in their attitude to love. Their women seldom kiss or are kissed. And when they do so, it is on the cheeks not

on the lips!<sup>2</sup> They show their longing, instead, by yawning and stretching and by covert glances and smiles, and only the wanton among them ogling and shamelessly baring their midriffs. They make love but are never shown doing it. We only know they have done so, by their limbs bearing love-bites and nail scratches, the marks of pearls and gems pressed between clinging bosoms, sleep-starved reddened eyes, tired listless bodies, tell-tale signs, like eyebrows stained with the lips' betel-juice or lips stained by the eyes' lamp-black, and perhaps a ring or a garland exchanged when the 'woman plays the man', and carelessly left where it was, afterwards.

Love, for the *ritikāla* poets meant the joy of union as well as the pangs of separation. Often it arose in the heart by the mere sight of the loved one, even before the lovers met. Thus there were three elements constituting it—love before union, meeting, and separation. Love before union may be born by hearing about the beloved, seeing her picture, or having a mere glimpse of her. In all these states the women messengers of lovers, or their companions, played a prominent role. They exchanged messages between lovers, extolled their qualities to attract them to each other and arranged meetings. Kalyāna Malla lists fifteen kinds of women who can act as the go-betweens (AR, pp. 206–8), while Vātsyāyana devotes a whole chapter to go-betweens in his noteworthy book on eroticism, and mentions eight types (KS, pp. 109–14). Some of them go on special errands like carrying presents or exchanging love-letters. Others undertake the entire task of bringing the lovers together. In rare cases the woman chosen as the messenger turns out to be so charming that the lover cannot resist the temptation of seducing her, and instead of a go-between she becomes his mistress!

Another characteristic of the *nāyikās* depicted by the *ritikāla* poets was what they called *mān* (literally 'arrogance'), a word which does not seem to have an exact equivalent in English. It is the 'chief cause of quarrels between lovers'. According to Bhūpāl, a Sanskrit writer, it may be of four kinds—produced by sight, by knowing about another woman's enjoyment, by hearing about another woman through the *nāyaka* himself, or by hearing about such a woman from a person other than the *nāyaka*. The *mānini* is the woman offended because she sus-

pects her lover to be faithless to her or finds tell-tale signs of his guilt on him. The wronged woman's anger fluctuates between putting on a mere pretence and persistent sulking. Thus the amount of appeasement by the recalcitrant lover also varies. He may flatter her, ask her forgiveness, or even fall at her feet. In all this the girl's confidante or companion goads him on, for she is eager to bring about a reconciliation. But if the adulterous lover persists in denying his guilt with false excuses and keeps giving fictitious explanations for the love marks on his limbs, it enrages his girl the most and the making up becomes all the more difficult. It also provokes her to speak her mind about his false denials.

Bihārī strikes the entire gamut of *ritikāla* poetry, the ornateness of language and diction, the sensuous concept of beauty and the voluptuousness of love. He describes the beauty of adolescent and youthful girls, and sometimes of middle-aged women. Occasionally it is a lovely rustic belle flaunting her robust charms, wearing a necklace of beads or of strikingly colourful seeds. The beauty of nature and of the seasons is also described by Bihārī with equal charm. But most of his verses are naturally about love and love-making and the bewitching charm of lovely women, for these form the backbone of *śṛṅgāra*. The *nāyikā* in all her moods—amorous in love-making, angry when wronged, sorrowful in separation and thrilled by the union with her lover—form the core of his love poetry.

Bihārī put love on a high pedestal. For him it did not mean just sex. He prized equally the sweet strains of music, the haunting melody of song, and the ecstasy of verse.<sup>3</sup> But the overpowering passion of youth, he believed, carried everything before it, like a river in flood.<sup>4</sup> Bihārī was what the Hindi poets call a *rasika*. This implies one who has a deep emotional response to beauty, not only in the human form, but in everything, as for example in nature or the arts, a moving strain of music, a haunting melody, or a glorious sunset. It is not only that which stirs the heart which is beautiful, but also that which elevates the mind and the soul. So was it with love also. In one of his verses he says, 'That sublime ocean which connoisseurs of beauty and love can't fathom, even after diving in it a thousand times, seems to be a mere

ditch, easily crossed, to people with carnal minds'.<sup>5</sup> His object was to elevate love and beauty to a point where they turn from the coarse to the sublime, and this was not an easy task. It was, as Marlowe had said, next to impossible, for when everything had been written by the poets:

Yet should there hover in their restless heads,  
One thought, one grace, one wonder at the least  
Which into words no virtue can digest.<sup>6</sup>

Indeed much like Marlowe, Bihārī says: 'The spoken words are of no account, because they are false. That's why perhaps Brahmā (the Creator) has made eyes for expressing what lies in the heart.'<sup>7</sup>

Despite his occasional lapses (even Homer nods), Bihārī fulfilled his object admirably. The love he narrates soars to sensuous and even spiritual heights. It is a love which knows no bounds, and which is indifferent to praise and blame: 'There are many virtuous married women in Gokul (the scene of Kṛṣṇa's amours),' he says, 'and each sermons the other on upright conduct. But who among them has not abandoned family honour on hearing the bewitching notes of Kṛṣṇa's flute?'<sup>8</sup> And when a girl spreads out her lovely tresses, the *nāyaka* is so enraptured that he cannot distinguish between right and wrong!<sup>9</sup>

Bihārī conceived of love as a pure and healthy emotion. In this he followed the tradition of Hindu erotic writers like Vātsyāyana and Kalyāṇa Malla, who even went to the extent of developing love and love-making as an art in which all citizens ought to be properly trained! 'A beautiful person,' says Bihārī, 'is attractive only so long as there is love in the heart, as a lamp will give light only when there's oil in it'.<sup>10</sup> Separation does not diminish love, for love, as Shakespeare says, 'looks not with the eyes, but with the mind.'<sup>11</sup> Bihārī's *nāyikā* may be parted from her lover, but like a kite aloft in the sky, his love can't go away, for her mind is always joined to him as the string attached to the kite always stays in the flier's hands.<sup>12</sup> Beauty, too, is not something external. It is in the eye of the beholder. 'Nothing is intrinsically beautiful or inelegant in this world,' says the poet. 'It may seem lovely to one and plain to another, depending on the attraction one has for it.'<sup>13</sup>



Bihārī had of course to describe love in its physical aspect too, for otherwise he wouldn't be conforming to the requirement of *ritikāla* poetry. He had also to make many of his verses suit the tastes of kings in order to trigger their interest. But it wouldn't be fair to accuse him of not being able to 'rise above the limitations of his age and look into the depth of life,' or of not being able to cultivate 'the philosophic mind', as one critic says.<sup>14</sup> He could not be a diver moving on the ocean bed of philosophy—he couldn't then have been a *ritikāla* poet at all—but he certainly dived often enough to be a philosophical observer of life. His verses on 'wisdom' will surely prove that. He was all this, and more; for with him love was a kind of religion, something mundane and yet divine. It was almost like emancipation, as he says in one of his couplets.<sup>15</sup> He would have believed with Scott that

Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,  
And men below, and saints above;  
For love is heaven, and heaven is love.<sup>16</sup>

### ***The Concept of Beauty in Bihārī's Poetry***

A notable feature of Bihārī's descriptions of human beauty is the quaintness of the imagery he uses. Describing the adolescent girl he says, 'Youth swells out some parts of her body at the cost of others which it makes slender, like a rapacious official depriving those who are not in his favour, of their wealth, to enrich his favourites.'<sup>1</sup> The ornaments a girl wears are 'as a doormat for onlookers to wipe their glances on, so that her body retains its shine'<sup>2</sup> The slightly raised breasts of an adolescent girl can be seen by peering carefully at them 'as the abstruse meaning of a poem revealed only by close study'.<sup>3</sup> The swelling breasts of a woman make men abandon their virtue as 'travellers avoiding a bandit-infested hill road'.<sup>4</sup> A woman's chin is so charming that strangled by the noose of her smile, her admirer lies dead in its hollow.<sup>5</sup>

Indian poets often describe a woman's beautiful limbs in exaggerated terms. Bihārī sometimes uses this device. About the

slenderness of a woman's waist he says, 'People gather she must have a waist because they hear she has one. No one has actually seen it'!<sup>6</sup> 'The glances of men who look at the slender waist of another woman described, remain stuck to it as birds stuck fast in birdlime'!<sup>7</sup> 'The feet of a woman are so tender that blisters are liable to appear on them if they are rubbed clean with a brush of roses'!<sup>8</sup> A barber's wife who comes to apply red lacquer dye on a girl's feet finds them so charming and rosy that she thinks it is pointless dyeing them red.<sup>9</sup>

Bihārī's *nāyikās*, like those described by other Hindi love poets, adorn themselves and wear ornaments on various parts of their body. Speaking of a girl's eyes darkened with lamp-black, he says 'who are these bandit-like eyes of yours about to rob?'<sup>10</sup> In another verse he eulogizes the crimson mark on a girl's forehead.<sup>11</sup> A girl's lover is fascinated by the tip of her little finger reddened with henna dye.<sup>12</sup> The usual traditional forms of adornments like the *bindī* (beauty mark on a girl's forehead), henna, and so forth, are frequently mentioned. All the various kinds of ornaments worn by Indian women are described, for example the ear ornament and the nose-ring.<sup>13</sup> Not infrequently the *nāyikā's* natural beauty is so great that ornaments are of no use in enhancing it; indeed they may even mar it, as the case of the girl on whose body they are 'as rust on a mirror's face'!<sup>14</sup>

The *śṛṅgāra* poets were fascinated by the girl passing from childhood to adolescence. They wrote enthusiastically about such a girl's lengthening eyes, shy sidelong glances, budding breasts, slimming waist, and the three folds appearing below her navel. Bihārī, too, has many such descriptions.<sup>15</sup> Girls are also depicted bathing in ponds and rivers or sporting in the water in pools in their mansions, or swinging on a wooden plank suspended from the branch of a tree in their garden.<sup>16</sup>

With infinite charm and brevity, Bihārī depicts his women in various moods and situations like the woman lazying, anxious, pleased, excited, proud, sorrowful and so forth. A woman who has been love-making all night, walks proudly but with an unsteady gait.<sup>17</sup> Bashful girls keep timidly peering at their lover from behind casements, and one of them is so shy indeed that while doing so she dare not remove her veil!<sup>18</sup> Celebrating the festival of Holi, a woman gracefully lifts her

veil and turning slightly towards her lover without glancing at him, throws on him a fistful of *gulāl* (coloured powder), leaving him spell-bound.<sup>19</sup> Conflicting emotions are sometimes displayed by his *nāyikā*, as for example the girl who, when she comes to know that her husband, ignoring her co-wives, has been making love to another woman, is glad, downcast, angry, amused, pleased and vexed, all in one moment.<sup>20</sup>

Although Bihārī's heroines generally stay sober, a few of them are soused with wine. One of them 'sways drunkenly, and laughing and mumbling, shamelessly embraces her lover again and again'.<sup>21</sup> When the flush of intoxication mounts on the face of another woman, her forehead's sandalwood paste mark which ordinarily blends into her complexion, stands out sharply.<sup>22</sup>

Charming as they are, the merit of Bihārī's descriptions of women lies more in their ingenuity than in their originality. He uses all the conventional comparisons for the various parts of a woman's body; the moon for the face, the wagtail, the deer, the fish and the lily for eyes, a bow for eyebrows, the trunk of a banana tree for thighs and so forth. The golden complexion, the triple folds above the waist, and rosy feet are all items in beauty's inventory.<sup>23</sup> He also follows the usual practice of Hindi love poets of describing a woman's beauty from head to foot (*nakhśikh varṇan*: *nakhśikh*= from head to foot, *varṇan*= description).

The handsome man is not described in such detail. Kṛṣṇa is often praised for his charm, as for example the verse in which his body is likened to 'the peak of a sapphire hill in the morning sun'.<sup>24</sup> In another verse a man is said to be so handsome that his girl's eyes keep glued to him for ever.<sup>25</sup>

Although there are some fascinating descriptions of beauty in the *Satasai*, they are subordinate to the love element in it. The strands of beauty and love are twisted together, and quite often that of beauty is so slender that it can hardly be noticed!

Nevertheless Bihārī's concept of beauty was not skin-deep. He sought it in everything around him. A haunting melody or a thrilling strain, the ravishing beauty of nature and the grandeur of the seasons—all moved him. For him beauty was a kind of ecstatic revelation. It was

indeed truth. And that, says Keats, 'is all ye know on earth and all ye need to know'.<sup>26</sup>

### *Nature in Bihārī's Poetry*

Although Bihārī cannot be said to have a keen perception of nature in all its myriad charms, such as, for example, Wordsworth had, the stray verses in the *Satasai* which describe natural beauty show his deep feeling for it. Some of his descriptions of nature are startlingly beautiful. Describing the parting of the clouds after a shower he says, 'The massed clouds have been scattered, and wayfarers can again move on the pathways happily'.<sup>1</sup> In quite a number of his descriptions he uses erotic imagery, as when he likens the breeze to a lover embracing his girl, or Summer grieved at parting from Spring, his beloved.

The cool breeze suddenly arising in the night is like 'a lover who remains inert all day but at midnight comes to caress his beloved's breasts'.<sup>2</sup> It comes 'laden with the perfume of flowers, like a newly-wed bride with faltering steps, tired and perspiring, and bashfully covering her limbs'.<sup>3</sup> The warm, nectar-laden, southern wind comes haltingly, 'like a tired wayfarer resting off and on under the shade of trees'.<sup>4</sup>

The Indian seasons are described in a picturesque and charming manner. Spring comes with the hum of black bees pleasing to the ears 'as the jingle of bells, and laden with the nectar of flowers as ichor dropped from the temples of elephants in rut'.<sup>5</sup> It is the season when 'black bees wander about intoxicated with the fragrance of mango blossoms and the Spanish jasmine'.<sup>6</sup> The heat of summer is so intense that even creatures which prey on each other take refuge from it at the same spot.<sup>7</sup> In the rainy season the blanket of dark clouds covers the earth so completely that the ruddy goose thinks night has come and starts calling to its mate!<sup>8</sup> Autumn is likened to a charming girl who captivates everyone wherever she goes.<sup>9</sup> Just as the heat of the Indian summer is oppressive, the cold of its winters often becomes unbearable. Bihārī puts it figuratively: 'When warmth was scared away by winter's cold, it

went and hid in the impregnable breasts of women'!<sup>10</sup> The daylight in winter months when the sky is overcast, is so dim that the *cakor* bird (which is believed to be enamoured of the moon) mistakes the sun for the moon and keeps staring at it rapturously.<sup>11</sup> The bright full moon of *Aświn* (September–October) is so fascinating that it is believed to drop nectar! Bihārī describes it as 'the canopy of the love god scattering its brilliance on earth'.<sup>12</sup>

Flowers find place in Bihārī's descriptions, but rather than bring out their beauty, his purpose, primarily, is to accentuate the loveliness of his women. The jasmine and the *campā* serve to emphasize the yellow golden hue of a girl's complexion.<sup>13</sup> The crimson *gullālā* flower is mentioned to point out the state of sleep-starved eyes of a woman who has been making love all night.<sup>14</sup> When a woman with rosy feet walks, the poet fancies a red *dupahariyā* flower blossoming at each step she takes!<sup>15</sup> A rare occasion when a flower's loveliness is described without serving such an end, is the verse in which the blossoming *palāśa* trees in a forest (bearing flaming red flowers) spread such a riot of colour that some travellers who have never seen such a sight before, think it is a forest fire and hurry off to escape its flames!<sup>16</sup>

Very few of Bihārī's descriptions of nature are for their own sake. They were not an end in themselves, only the means to an end. He harnessed nature to heighten the loveliness of his women. His flowers seldom grow on trees. They are threaded on garlands dangling on the lovely breasts of his women. The seasons don't bestow beauty to the landscape. They serve to excite dormant passions. Nature, in Bihārī's verse, is only the bridesmaid. It is love and corporeal beauty which are the bridegroom and the bride.

### *Philosophy in the Satasaī*

It is sometimes said that Bihārī was so taken up with the aristocracy that he ignored the common people. Also that he 'looked down on the rustics' and 'rural ways at every level were only a laughing-stock with him'.<sup>1</sup> It is true that the society in which Bihārī moved was highly

urbanized. The Moghuls neglected the villages and scrupulously avoided them. The nobility and the intelligentsia was concentrated in the towns. Renowned poets, musicians and artists thronged the Moghul courts and the courts of Indian native rulers. For all this Bihārī could hardly be held responsible, for he, just as anyone else, had to move with the times. He painted village life as he found it, but nowhere does he speak unfavourably either of the common people or of the village folk.

The village women he describes are praised for their beauty in no uncertain words—the rustic girl with ‘a mark of rice and turmeric on her brow’, the village belle with dimpled cheeks, the big-breasted beauty tending her field, the radiant-faced housewife doing her chores, and the woman gracefully working the spinning wheel.<sup>2</sup> Bihārī disparages only those village people whom he finds to be fools and dunces, and who are too stupid to appreciate the finer things of life.<sup>3</sup>

Bihārī wasn’t at all against the common man. It was his destiny which brought him into contact with those in power. But he could ‘walk with kings—nor lose the common touch’.<sup>4</sup> In fact he was critical of ‘kings who crush the weak’ and bemoans that ‘the faults of great men are often overlooked’.<sup>5</sup> No one knew more than him that power corrupts and greatness thrust on the unworthy does not sit at ease. He condemned men who turn vain by empty flattery.<sup>6</sup> He was aware that one had to surrender his self-respect if he craved for royal favour.<sup>7</sup> He knew that one liked to stick to a high office even though slighted.<sup>8</sup> But whatever a man’s position, however wealthy he was, he could not achieve greatness if he was shallow-minded, and such homage to the undeserved was only for a while.<sup>9</sup> Power, Bihārī knew, was not only empty without worth, it was also shortlived. While one held a chair people flocked to him for favours, but forgot all about him when he was there no longer. Such a man was like a flashing garland of seeds, valued so long as it lay on a lovely woman’s bosom, but of no account when cast away.<sup>10</sup> The nature of a man can’t change, Bihārī believed, although he may ‘try a million ways to change it’.<sup>11</sup> An ignorant man does not become learned merely because people call him so. He has to have real wisdom.<sup>12</sup> Even good company cannot reform the wicked.<sup>13</sup>



But the influence of the age in which one lives does have its effect. Even God becomes heartless in the sinful *Kali* age (when morality is at the lowest ebb).<sup>14</sup>

Bihārī's attitude to wealth was equally balanced. He did not despise wealth but believed it should be acquired by honest means. He knew that the intoxication of wealth was unbounded. However rich a man, he never abandoned his quest for amassing it, and even went round begging for money!<sup>15</sup> The richer a man was the stingier he became.<sup>16</sup> In order to put a stop to the race for wealth, a man should restrict his desires and be content with simple food and plain clothes, and with one woman for his wife.<sup>17</sup> As for himself, the poet says, 'If I can get esteem along with wealth which is not tainted with evil, why should I hanker after money?'<sup>18</sup>

He was also aware of the evanescent nature of power, even though he had the protection of powerful men. He decried the pompous person who bragged about the homage paid to him for just a short while, and the man in power swollen with vanity.<sup>19</sup> He also condemned the depraved and the wicked and those who managed to get power even though they had no merit.<sup>20</sup> He bemoans the tendency to ignore the righteous man and honour the wicked.<sup>21</sup>

Knowing the falseness of worldly honour, the shallowness of power, and the depravity of the wicked, Bihārī was nonetheless a realist. He realized that it was the people of importance who could benefit others, not the resourceless man. He wasn't an opportunist, but believed in making the best use of opportunities. He would have agreed with Shakespeare that,

There is a tide in the affairs of men,  
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;<sup>22</sup>

What counts is help, he says, irrespective of the source from where it comes.<sup>23</sup> A rich benefactor must not be given up, even though he may fall on evil days. Maybe there's a comeback, and then his favours will revive.<sup>24</sup> Although wealth was not meant to be squandered, one who had the means, would be a fool if he denied himself proper food

and the necessities of life.<sup>25</sup> Sometimes even a petty thing was worth its weight in gold, if it could fulfil the need of the moment.<sup>26</sup>

All the pleasures of the world, Bihārī believed, are in the end of no consequence, for they are fraught, as the Buddhists would say, with pain. The shackles of worldly existence, cares and worries, are difficult to shake off. The more one tries to get free of them the more entangled he is.<sup>27</sup> One can't control his destiny, but it is within his power to be unhappy with his lot, or satisfied. 'If one could be content with his gains and reconciled to his losses' says Bihārī, 'he could achieve salvation in a moment'.<sup>28</sup> And in that again, he echoes Kipling's idealism:

If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster  
And treat those two imposters just the same.<sup>29</sup>

### *The Devotional Element in Bihārī's Poetry*

Bihārī was deeply religious, but the few devotional verses in the *Satasai* (a little over fifty) were not intended to formulate any sectarian viewpoint. He was against any controversies about religion, and at one place says 'people fruitlessly wrangle over the various faiths'.<sup>1</sup> His favourite deity, however, seems to be Kṛṣṇa (though he mentions Rāma too in a couple of his verses).<sup>2</sup> Some scholars, picking on a stray verse of his in which he speaks of a formless god, think he was a Vedantist. But that does not appear to be reasonable, for he places emphasis on the devotional aspect and most of his verses are addressed to the God Kṛṣṇa.<sup>3</sup>

Resignation and acceptance of one's lot, are the keynotes of Bihārī's religious thinking, as indeed they are of all religion.<sup>4</sup> Meekness and humility win God's favour. The arrogant man can never achieve devotion.<sup>5</sup> It is only God's grace which can bring a man relief, and God cares for the man who is helpless and throws himself completely on his mercy.<sup>6</sup> Sensual desires are an impediment to devotion, and should be cast off 'this very moment'.<sup>7</sup> Devotion is the only way to achieve salvation. It is that alone which can steer one across the ocean of worldly existence.<sup>8</sup> But it must be true devotion, not mere outward show like

painting holy marks on the body, saying the rosary, going on pilgrimages and the like.<sup>9</sup>

A number of Bihārī's devotional verses are addressed to God as a kind of complaint or taunt (*upalambha*). In these he upbraids Kṛṣṇa for not listening to his prayers and for remaining indifferent to him.<sup>10</sup>

In accordance with the traditional views of the times about women, Bihārī, even though praising their beauty and grace, believes that they are an impediment to spiritual advancement. Strangely enough, though he portrays his youths as being the greater transgressors of morality, he calls a woman 'the temptress ever lying in wait to pounce upon the man striving for salvation'!<sup>11</sup>

### ***Bihārī's Poetic Art***

Some scholars are of the view that Bihārī's poetry lacks depth, 'serenity of the soul', and 'seriousness of thought'. They feel it is neither dynamic nor original and inventive, and often just a clever manipulation of words; that it has no spontaneity, 'emotive quality', or sublimity of sentiments; that it fails to rise from mere eroticism to 'the heights of genuine love'. They disparage Bihārī as having 'no message to give' and 'having no plans to improve life or to bring about a change in the philosophical temper of the age'.<sup>1</sup>

On the contrary there are other scholars who are all praise for Bihārī. Professor Viśvanāth Prasāda Miśra writes that the excellence of his poetry is seldom to be found in Hindi poets.<sup>2</sup> George A. Grierson says, 'I have never failed to find fresh pleasures in its (the *Satasat*'s) study, and fresh beauties in the dainty word-colouring of the old master.'<sup>3</sup> F. E. Key praises Bihārī as being 'the most celebrated Hindi writer in connection with the art of poetry' and says about the *Satasat* that 'it is a triumph of skill and felicity of expression'.<sup>4</sup> Another critic says about Bihārī, 'He is intellectual but not without emotion. He is sophisticated but not pedantic. He is fond of the dazzling magic of words but somehow manages to communicate from the plane of common experience. Perhaps his verse has not lost its lustre nor force all these

centuries because of two not-so-common qualities—restraint over the devices of expression and balance between design and spontaneity.<sup>5</sup> Āditya Nāth Jhā, an eminent scholar, remarks that ‘most of Bihārī’s poems find their way straight to the heart’.<sup>6</sup>

It should not be forgotten that Bihārī was a love poet of the *ritikāla* tradition. One could not expect such a poet to have a message to give or to be philosophical. The subject of *ritikāla* poetry was external life, the meeting and parting of lovers and their changing moods, and the beauty of youths and girls. It was, as one writer has said, ‘very much a poetry of the world’.<sup>7</sup> To say that Bihārī lacked ‘the philosophical temper’, ‘high seriousness of thought and serenity of the soul’, is to expect from him what he never even tried for. Nor did he seek innovation. Indeed it was unnecessary for him to do so when he could express whatever he wanted by the simple couplet. The other things critics say he lacked were originality, spontaneity and ‘pure emotive quality’, and in addition he is accused of being just a juggler of words. Originality may be all right as a requisite of philosophy, politics and so forth, but in poetry there’s nothing really new under the sun. Poets have from eternity been writing about love, beauty and nature and, to twist a cliché, it is all the same wine in different bottles. As regards jugglery with words, all writing, and poetry in particular, is that, to a certain extent. But the poet does not throw about his words as a magician doing his tricks. He carefully chooses them like a jeweller matching gems to make a perfect ornament. In this sense Bihārī was certainly a juggler with words, and one of the biggest ones born. He stringed words together making them seem as beautiful as the flowers in the garlands he decked his women with. Each one was put in its place to create the effect he wanted, as when he described the different kinds of breezes—the cool one which rises suddenly at midnight, the gentle fragrant one, and the hot oppressive breeze which haltingly blows from the south.<sup>8</sup>

The *ritikāla* poets had no truck with sermons on philosophy, and it would be as vain to search for these in them as to seek accounts of love-making in the writings of Kant. Bihārī was, in fact, an exception, inasmuch as he has a fair number of verses in the *Satasaī* on wisdom

and devotion. Instead of being censured for not being able to put across a message on morals and so forth, he ought to be given credit for doing so well with such opposed tasks as depicting love and beauty and producing gems of wisdom.<sup>9</sup>

The idea that Bihārī's poetry is unemotional and not spontaneous enough, stems from the excessive ornateness of its language. The ornateness can't be denied. His poetry is like a woman over-decked with jewellery. In order to appreciate why Bihārī chose to be ornate rather than plain in his language, one has to take into account the kind of poetry he was writing. *Ritikāla* poetry was highly sophisticated, and the poets made copious use of verbal devices to bring about this effect. The foremost of these was *alankāra* (literally 'ornamentation' or 'embellishment'). A Sanskrit writer declares this to be the soul of poetry. *Alankāra* is a word which does not have any English equivalent. It is sometimes understood as 'figures of speech' but it is not exactly that, for it is something wider. It is defined as 'those devices which establish such a relation between word and meaning as adds to the charm of poetry'.<sup>10</sup> Other characteristics of *ritikāla* poetry are *śaili*, i.e. 'style of expression' and *hāva* (roughly 'blandishments') which implies the various ways in which women give expression to their longing to meet their lovers.<sup>11</sup> The *ritikāla* poets made very frequent use of various figures of speech, to a far greater extent than in any other kind of verse. Besides there is a difference between what 'figures of speech' imply in English and what they do in Hindi. In Hindi they are more complex, with finer shades of distinction. *Ritikāla* poets, and Bihārī too, exploited to the full all these devices, and among them also the ones used in English, like the metaphor, hyperbole, fancy (*utprekṣā*), double entendre (*śleṣa*), irony, innuendo, satire, oxymoron, onomatopoeia, pun, paronomasia and richness of imagery.

Bound as he was by the canons of *ritikāla* poetry Bihārī could hardly be an innovator. But despite this he was one in the sense that he enlarged the scope of Brajabhāṣā, the language in which he wrote. True he invented no new metre or style, but he borrowed words from different sources in writing his *Satasat*, mainly Bundeli and Sanskrit, and those of foreign origin, Persian, Arabic and Turkish, thus enriching his

language. Other devices for making it lively were the use of idioms and proverbs, personification and transferred epithet like 'smiling eyes', 'tired wind' and so forth. He also coined new words, for example *chamgira* 'shade-giving umbrella' (from the Prākṛta, *cham* meaning 'shade' and the Persian suffix *gira* meaning 'umbrella').

Bihārī was able to draw charming pictures with an economy of words that is amazing.<sup>12</sup> His verses have often a haunting onomatopoeic quality which gives them a musical lilt.<sup>13</sup> He injects variety in his language. For example he has forty different names for Kṛṣṇa and a number of them for the black bee (*ali*, *bhṛṅga*, *bhounṛā*, *madhukara*, *madhupa*, etc.).

Humour was almost unknown to the *ṛitikāla* poets, but Bihārī has it in quite a few of his verses.<sup>14</sup> His knowledge of *āyurveda* (the Hindu system of medicine), astrology, astronomy and so forth is also evident in many others. Being a court poet he was familiar with royal recreations and pastimes like polo (*caugān*), horse riding etc. In one of his verses he depicts his intimate knowledge of the training of horses.<sup>15</sup>

It can't be denied that there are verses in which Bihārī's genius suddenly seems to take a dip. In one of these he says the flames of separation so greatly scorch a woman that even on winter nights her companions can't go near her except by holding a wet cloth as a kind of shield!<sup>16</sup> This is too much for the mind to take in. Then there is the verse which depicts a woman so frail that Death, who's after her can't spot her even with glasses on!<sup>17</sup> The imagery used by the poet is not only strange but also crude. Very occasionally Bihārī also violates poetic convention, which in a *ṛitikāla* poet is unpardonable; as for example when he makes a black bee alight on a *campā* blossom.<sup>18</sup> Bihārī's craze for *alankāra* sometimes makes him overdo it. In one of his verses an angry girl swears by her uncle, of all the persons!<sup>19</sup> This, merely because he found the word for uncle, *kakā* (or *kākā*) more appropriate to the pattern of alliteration in the verse. But such lapses are few, and predominantly his poetry is never banal or commonplace.

Bihārī was pompous no doubt. His verses are profusely ornate, like an overdressed bride. Nonetheless his skill is amazing. He does stir the emotions, but of course primarily those of love and beauty because he

was a poet of love. His verses are amazing in their variety and brevity, and have rightfully been likened to polished gems.

### *The Satasai Tradition and Bihārī's Achievement*

There were very few verse anthologies in early Hindi and Sanskrit literature. Books of stray verses, particularly of love poetry, were popular. The larger collections came later. The first large collection of love poetry was the *Sapta-Śatikā* or 'Seven Centuries' of Hāla, written at the beginning of the third century and containing about seven hundred verses in the Prākṛta.<sup>1</sup> It is notable that this was almost the same length as Bihārī's *Satasai*. The *Sapta-Śatikā* was followed by other smaller anthologies of a hundred poems or less. The most outstanding among these was the *Vajjalagga*. Both these works began to attract Sanskrit writers. Amarūka wrote the *Amaru-Śataka* 'Century of Amaru' and Bhartrihari the *Vairāgya-Śataka* and *Śṛṅgāra-Śataka*. Almost every Sanskrit poet was busy writing an anthology in the sixth and seventh centuries. But the subjects were mostly religious. Some time after, Rahīm wrote his collection of seven hundred couplets of which only half have come down to us. Tulsīdāsa wrote a verse anthology at about the same time.

Although Bihārī was not the founder of the mode of writing *Satasai* collections (*satasai* meaning 'an anthology of seven hundred verses'), it was he who made this form of writing greatly popular. After him there was a flood of *Satasais*, which has continued even to this day, some of the prominent ones being *Vikrama Satasai*, *Śṛṅgāra Satasai*, *Matirāma Satasai*, *Vṛnda Satasai*, *Vīra Satasai* and so forth. Every succeeding poet who wrote in this form, copied Bihārī, and some of them tried to expand their anthologies to even greater lengths, writing collections of over a thousand verses.

Apart from the imitators, Bihārī's *Satasai* found a host of commentators, about sixty in all. Commentaries were written for three hundred years after, and still new ones are coming up almost every year. The first commentary was by Kṛṣṇa Lāla in 1662, followed by one by Mān

Singha of Udaipur between 1673 and 1677. The better known commentaries are those of Jagannātha Dāsa Ratnākara (*Bihārī-Ratnākara*) which came out in 1926, and Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna (*Bihārī-Bodhinī*), 1950. These commentators helped a great deal in the proper understanding of Bihārī's terse couplets. But often they did him a dis-service too, reading all kinds of fancy meanings into them, and losing what the poet might have meant, in the maze of scholarship.

Scholars of Sanskrit, Persian, Urdu and Gujarātī wrote glosses and commentaries on the *Satasai*, and made translations of it. Paṇḍita Hariprasāda translated the verses into Sanskrit in the Āryā metre. Another Sanskrit translation was made by Paṇḍita Parmānanda Bhaṭṭa. Ānadi Lāl Śarmā made a Persian rendering. Two translations in Urdu were Munśi Devī Prasāda's *Guladaste-e-Bihārī* and *Gulazāra-e-Bihārī* by an unknown writer.

Not content with mere translation, other scholars tried to recast Bihārī's *Satasai* into different forms such as the *kuṇḍali*, *savaiyā* and *kavitta* metres. One of the scholars, Choṭū Rāma, even tried to interpret the verses of the *Satasai* in terms of the Hindu system of medicine (*āyurveda*)!

Bihārī's *Satasai* contains approximately seven hundred couplets in the Hindi verse form known as a *dohā* or *sorāṭhā*. Neither the exact number of the verses nor their arrangement is uniform in the various recensions, of which there are as many as twenty-five, the most famous of these being the *Anwara-Candrikā* (1714) and the *Azamāsāhī* (1724)—the latter prepared at the instance of Āzam Khān, the ruler of Āzamgarh, by a poet of Jaunpur called Harjū. Quite often even the wordings show minor differences.

Grierson has defined the *dohā* (in which most of the verses have been written) as having twenty-four *mātrās* or instants. Each line of the *dohā* has six feet (*gaṇas*), and the division of these in the first and second half of the line is respectively 6+4+3 and 6+4+1 *mātrās*. The last foot of the three *mātrās* of the first part must be a tribrach (*nagaṇa*) or iambus (*dhvaja*), the last two syllables of the second part of the line must be a trochee (*tāla*). There are twenty-one varieties of the *dohā*.



Hindi poets, including Bihārī, have not kept strictly to the prescribed form.

The *sorathā* is just a *dohā* reversed. The second and fourth parts of the two lines of the *dohā* become in the *sorathā* the first and the third; and the first and third, the second and fourth. The scheme of the line is, therefore, 11+13 instead of 13+11, and the general method of scansion is 6+4+1, 6+4+3. An example of the *sorathā* verse form is verse 181. The *dohā* and *sorathā* are so closely linked that one version may consider a particular verse as a *dohā* and another the same verse as a *sorathā*, the two halves merely being transposed.<sup>2</sup>

Very few writers have achieved fame such as Bihārī's and that too just by a single work. The *Imperial Gazetteer* takes notice of only three Hindi poets, Tulsī, Sūr and Bihārī, and calls the *Satasai* one of the daintiest pieces of writing in any Indian language. Grierson says, 'Each couplet in itself is a completely finished miniature description of a mood or phase of nature, in which every touch of the brush is exactly the one needed and no one is superfluous.'<sup>3</sup> The verses have aptly been likened to perfect jewels or to a bouquet of flowers. Indeed they compress in their condensed language, thoughts, moods and situations for which other poets would require several lines to express. As one critic puts it, 'The *Satasai*'s couplets seem short, but they affect the heart as greatly as tiny barbs deeply embedded.'

Bihārī occupies a unique place among medieval poets. He is the only one on whose work so much critical literature has been written. Ācārya Rāmacandra Śukla says, 'no book has received such great honour in the *śṛṅgāra-kāvya* as the *Satasai*'.<sup>4</sup> His work is significant from the historical point of view also. It gives us much valuable information about the art, music, manners and pastimes of his age. Most scholars are agreed that Bihārī is the most renowned of the *ritikāla* poets. According to Paṇḍita Padmsingha Śarmā, 'his place is the highest among them'.<sup>5</sup> This is also the view of Dr Haravaṇśa Lāl Śarmā, who counts Bihārī amongst the few great Hindi poets, and says, 'of writers of stray verses in the *śṛṅgāra* style he is beyond doubt the most distinguished'.<sup>6</sup>

Both as a representative of his age and as foremost among the *rītikāla* poets, Bihārī's place in medieval Hindi literature is unchallenged. He initiated a tradition in poetry which survived for long. Some puritan critics seem to think he was at times obscene. Grierson clears this misunderstanding when he says that as a whole Bihārī's *Satasai* can by no stretch of the imagination be called 'an obscene work'.<sup>7</sup> He was erotic no doubt, but rarely obscene. Bihārī's poetry is timeless. Like gold its glint can never get dull. The haze of the centuries has not bedimmed its pristine brightness, and scholars still continue discovering new treasures in it.

### *A Note on Translation, Transliteration and the Arrangement of Verses*

Bihārī's verses are difficult to translate into another language. Any translation would, because of their terseness, mean expansion. That of course takes away much of the lilting rhythm and the ornamentation from the original. But that is inevitable. It is not without reason that Grierson says, 'Twenty years ago I began to translate him (Bihārī) into English, and after all that time, I have only been convinced of the impossibility of the adequate performance of the task at my hands.'<sup>1</sup> That's why the transliteration of each couplet has been given along with its rendering into English verse. The reader will thus be able to appreciate what a translation might not be able to capture.

It is not difficult for a reader unfamiliar with Brajabhāṣā to get an idea of the original from the transliteration, provided some pitfalls are avoided. One of these is the pronunciation of the 'o', which is to be pronounced as *o* in 'more' (not as in 'lion'). This is emphasized as no diacritical mark has been used for 'o' in the transliteration. Another difficulty is about the 'r' mark used. There is no exact equivalent for this in English, and the reader is advised to pronounce the *r* as 'r', but with the tip of the tongue higher up on the upper palate, and brushing it with a downward motion. The *m̐* nasalizes and lengthens the preceding vowel, as *n* in *bon* (French).

The *ch* sound is also not found in English. It is pronounced with the tip of the tongue placed slightly higher against the upper palate than in uttering the *c* sound (*ch* as in *church*), and emphasizing the *h* sound.

Other marks are explained as follows:

*a* as *u* in *but*.

*ā* as *a* in *rather*.

*i* as *i* in *fit*.

*ī* as *i* in *machine*.

*u* as *u* in *put*.

*r* as *rī* in *rīvea*

*ū* as *u* in *rule*.

*e* as *ay* in *say*.

*ṇ* as *ṇ* in *sing*.

*ñ* as *n* in *hinge*.

*ś, ṣ* as *s* in *sugar*.

*g* as *g* in *goat*.

*ṭ* as *t* in *top*.

*t, d, n* are dentals.

*ḍ* as *d* in *door*.

*c* as *ch* in *church*.

Cerebrals (*t, th, d, dh, n*)

are pronounced with the

tongue retroflexed, i.e.,

turned up and back against

the roof of the mouth.

The dentals (*t, th, d, dh, n*)

are pronounced with the tip

of the tongue against the

back of the upper front teeth.

The verses have been grouped under broad heads, avoiding the too meticulous groupings of commentators like Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna. The context of the verses has been explained by the line in italics just above the translated version, as for example '*What her companion said*' or '*What one of her companions said to another*'. 'Her' means the *nāyikā*, and her companion (or confidante) who is invariably a woman, just as the *nāyaka*'s friend, or confidant, is a man.

Jagannātha Dāsa Ratnākara's commentary (*Bihārī-Ratnākara*) which came out in 1926 is one of the celebrated ones. He tried to bring some rational order in the verses by introducing a verse dealing with wisdom or devotion after each ten on love. Despite this they were not classified any further. The present translation groups the verses of the *Satasai* under various heads such as Love, Love-Making, Beauty, Wisdom and

so forth (as given in the chapter headings). This has been thought to be a more rational classification. The verses in the text (this translation) have been numbered consecutively throughout. The corresponding number in Ratnākara's arrangement has been indicated in the key at the end of the book. The spelling of the vernacular words in the transliteration, however, does not strictly follow Ratnākara's version. The two outstanding versions, namely Ratnākara's and Bhagawāna Dīna's (BBL), have been consulted, and the one which seemed more rational has been adopted.

In the verses which lend themselves to two or more interpretations, the translation follows the one which seemed most likely, and the others are mentioned in the note to the verse. Verses which require further elaboration or the explanation of some reference in them, are marked with an asterisk. Even though every effort has been made to avoid reference to notes, many of Bihārī's verses are so terse that they need further elucidation.



# The Sataśaī



# LOVE

1. *sani kajjala cakha jhakha lagan, upajau sudhina saneha |  
kyorin na nrpati hvai bhogavai, lahi sudesu saba deha ||*

What her messenger said

Love's child was born  
when you met her  
at an auspicious moment  
and looked into her collyrium-filled eyes.  
Enjoy her now, lover,  
as a king  
his domain.\*

2. *bahake saba jiya ki kahat, thaur kuthaur lakhairin na |  
china aurai china aura se, ye chabi chake nain ||*

What she said to her companion

Drunk with his beauty  
my wayward eyes  
do not heed the occasion,  
and forgetting themselves  
boldly speak out my love  
which I would rather  
keep hid!

3. *phiri phiri cita utahirin rahat, tufi laja ki lava |  
anga anga chabi jhaurira mairin, bhayau bhaurira ki nava ||*

What she said to her confidante

The rope of my shyness  
has snapped,  
my mind's boat is caught



in the whirlpool of contemplation  
of his lovely limbs.\*

4. *citai lalacauhairi cakhana, ðaṭi ghūringhaṭ paṭa māriha |*  
*chala som cali chuvāi kai, chinaka chabili chāriha ||*

What he said to her companion

That lovely woman  
threw an inviting glance at me  
from within her veil  
for just one moment,  
and then  
tantalizingly turned away  
brushing me merely  
with her shadow!

5. *piya bichurana kau dusaha dukha, haraṣu jāta pyausāra |*  
*durjomdhana lauri dekhiyat, tajat prāna ehi bāra ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Torn between the anguish  
of parting  
from her husband  
and the joy  
of meeting her parents,  
that woman's tortured mind  
is like Duryodhana's  
on his deathbed.\*

6. *kinehūm koṭik jatan, ab kahi kāthai kaun |*  
*bho mana mohān rūpa mili, pānī mairi kau laun ||*

What she said to her companion

As salt dissolved in water  
my thoughts are now one  
with his bewitching beauty:

a million ways will not  
bring them apart.

7. *bedhak aniyāre nayan, bedhat kar na niṣedha |*  
*barabaṭ bedhat mo hiyo, to nāsā kau bedha ||*

What he said

It is not surprising, dear beloved,  
that your eyes  
pierce my heart  
for they are pointed:  
the wonder is  
that even the hole in your nose  
which is pierced itself  
should so grievously pierce it!\*

8. *saba hī saum samuhāti china, calat sabani dai pīṭhi |*  
*vāhī tyaum ṭhaharāti yaha, kibalanumā laum dīṭhi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Her glance brushes others  
only a moment,  
hastening back  
to her lover,  
as a *kibalanumā* needle  
vibrating  
before it steadies  
towards Mecca.\*

9. *kahat naṭat rījhat khijāt, milat khilat lajīyāt |*  
*bharē bhaun meṛ karat haīm, nainan hīm sorī bāt ||*

What one of her companions said to another

With pleading glance  
he asked her to make love,  
protesting

she shyly shook her head;  
her coy denial  
even then charmed him,  
and seeing his face lit up  
she was vexed;  
won over the next moment  
she nodded her consent,  
but when he beamed with joy  
she bashfully lowered her gaze.  
Thus even in the crowded hall  
the lovers spoke  
merely with their eyes.\*

10. *lakhi gurujaṇa bīc kamala saurī, sīsa chubāyau syām |  
hari sanamukha kari ārasī, hiyaim lagāi bām ||*

What Rādhā's companion said

When he saw Rādhā  
sitting among the elders,  
you know what the wily Kṛṣṇa did?  
He brushed his forehead with a lily  
implying  
'say yes, dear beloved,  
see, I'm even falling  
at your lotus feet!'  
Clever Rādhā  
consenting,  
flashed her mirrored ring  
at the sun  
and hid away her hand  
in the mounds of her breasts  
as though to say:  
'When the sun sets under the hills  
lover, I will come to you.'\*

11. *tohiṁ niramohi lagyau, mo hi yahai subhāu |*  
*anāyau āvai nahīṁ āyai āvatu āu ||*

What she wrote to her lover

Hasten to me, heartless lover,  
you alone I adore;  
but you shun me,  
and it seems my thoughts too  
take after your nature,  
for deserting me  
they also stay with you,  
returning only  
when you come!

12. *nahīṁ parāg nahīṁ madhura madhu, nahīṁ bikās ihiṁ kāla |*  
*ali kalīṁ hī saum barṁdhya, āgaiṁ kauna havāl ||*

What he said to him

You are bewitched  
by this slip of a girl,  
as a black bee lured  
by a mere bud  
without pollen or nectar!  
How will it be with you  
when she blossoms out  
in all her womanhood?\*

13. *khelan sikhaye ali bhalaiṁ, catūra aherī māra |*  
*kānancārī nain mṛga, nāgar naranu sikāra ||*

What her companion told him

Kāma, the wily huntsman,  
has taught her so, dear lad,  
that with her piercing glances  
that fawn-eyed girl of elongated eyes

wounds gallants of the town,  
turning the hunter hunted!\*

14. *sāje mohana moha kaum, mohīm karī kuchain |*  
*kahā karaurū ulaṭe pare, ṭone lone nain ||*

What she said to her confidante

I had adorned my eyes  
to cast a spell on Kṛṣṇa,  
little did I know  
he would turn it against me!  
His very sight, friend,  
now makes me restless.\*

15. *ḍārī sārī nīla kī, oṭ acūk cukairū na |*  
*mo mana mṛga karabaṭ gahairū, ahe aherī nain ||*

What he said

As a tiger pouncing  
from behind the branches  
seizes suddenly  
the helpless deer,  
her eyes glancing  
from within her blue sari  
have imprisoned me  
in their gaze.

16. *lakhi lone loyanani kairū, koinu hoi na āja |*  
*kaun garību nivājibau, kit tūṭhyau ratirāja ||*

What her companion said

No one can resist  
the charm of your vivacious eyes.  
Who will be the poor victim  
of your glance next?  
Dear friend,

whom will Kāma  
now grant his favour?\*

17. *mairiṁ tosaunṁ kaibā kahyo, tū jin inhaiṁ patyāi |*  
*lagālagī kari loinana, ur mairiṁ lāi lāi ||*

What her companion said to her

How often did I tell you  
not to trust your eyes  
still you heeded me not  
and let them dwell on him;  
and now see the outcome,  
it's your glance  
which has collided with his  
but what they've set afire  
is your poor heart!\*

18. *jau na juguti piya milan kī, dhūri mukuti muruha dina |*  
*jau lahiye saṁg sajan tau, dharak narak hūn kīna ||*

What she said

I care not for liberation  
if it does not lead me  
to my lover.  
Hell holds no fears for me  
if I can have him there  
by my side.\*

19. *kañjṇayani mañjana kiye, baiṭhī byaurati bāra |*  
*kac aṁguri bic ḍiṭhī dai, citavat nāṇdakumāra ||*

What one of her companions said to another

While tidying her hair  
after her bath  
that lotus-eyed girl  
made a peephole

of her fingers and her tresses  
through which she kept shyly glancing  
at her lover, Kṛṣṇa.\*

20. *kahati na devar ki kumati, kula tiya kalaha ḍarāti |*  
*pañjara gat mañjāra dhig, suka laum sūkati jāti ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Fearing a family feud  
that virtuous woman  
does not tell her husband  
of his younger brother's  
lasciviousness;  
but like a caged parrot  
in constant fear  
of a marauding cat,  
she silently withers  
day after day.\*

21. *tribali nābhi dikhai kai, sir ḍhaki sakuci samāhi |*  
*galī alī ki oḥ hvai, calī bhālī bidhī cāhi ||*

What he said to his friend

When she saw me  
she raised her hand  
and covered her head  
with her sari end  
as though from bashfulness,  
purposely baring  
her navel with its triple folds.  
Then, eluding her companion  
she gazed at me  
long and lovingly  
before she turned into the lane.\*

22. *kahat sabai kabi kamal se, mo mati nain pakhānu |*  
*nataruku kat in biya lagat, upajat birah-kṛsānu ||*

‘Lily eyes’  
say the poets,  
I think they’re more like stone;  
or else  
how can the fire of parting spring  
after they’ve collided?

23. *yā anurāgi citta kī, gati samujhai nahim koi |*  
*jyaurn jyaurn būtai syāma raṅga, tyaurṁ tyaurṁ ujjala hoi ||*

What she said to her companion

Wonderful indeed  
is my love-lorn mind;  
the more it’s drenched  
in Kṛṣṇa’s dark blackness  
the purer it emerges!\*

24. *chalā chabīle lāl kau, naval neha lahi nāri |*  
*cūmati cāhati lāi ur, pahirati dharati utāri ||*

What one of her companions said to another

That ring  
her handsome lover sent her  
as a token of their new love,  
she ardently gazes on  
fervently kisses  
and tenderly hugs to her bosom  
before wearing it.  
And when she takes it off  
she hides it away  
from curious eyes.



25. *lāj gahau bekāj kat, gheri rahe ghari jānhi |*  
*gorasa cāhat phirati hau, gorasa cāhati nānhi ||*

What she said to him

Have some decency  
brazen lover,  
why do you badger me  
needlessly here?  
Let me go home  
for it's not curd or milk  
you hunger for,  
but love-making!\*

26. *un harakī hamsikai itai, in saurpi musikāi |*  
*nain milairn mana mili gaye, dōū milavat gāi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Laughing  
he stopped her cows  
from mingling with his.  
She surrendered hers  
to his keeping  
with a smile.  
That moment  
their glances met  
and their hearts were united.\*

27. *cāle kī bātairn calirn, sunat sakhina kairn tol |*  
*goyeūrn loyana hamsat, bihamsat jāt kapol ||*

What her friend said

When her companions told her  
the date of her *gaunā*  
was being fixed  
she did her best to hide her joy,  
but her blossoming smile

and her cheek's glow  
were a dead giveaway.\*

28. *ḍagaku ḍagati si cali thiṭhuki, citai cali nihāri |*  
*liye jāti cit coraṭi, vahai goraṭi nāri ||*

What he said to his friend

Thrilled with longing  
that fair girl  
took a few unsteady steps,  
then stopping  
glanced at me covertly,  
and went away  
stealing my heart.

29. *pheru kachuk kari paur tem, phiri citai musakāye |*  
*āi jāvana lena hiya, nehaim cali jamāi ||*

What he said to her companion

No sooner than  
she reached her porch  
she turned back  
on some pretence,  
and, glancing at me,  
smiled.  
She had come for sour curd  
to cast into milk for curdling,  
but instead  
cast love in my heart!

30. *bana tana kauri nikasat lasat, hamsat hamsat it āi |*  
*ḍṛga khañjana gahi lai calyau, citavani caimpu lagai ||*

What she said to her confidante

Out to the woods  
for sport,

my lover of bewitching smiles  
passed by my house,  
ensnaring me in his glance  
as a *khañjana* bird trapped  
with birdlime!\*

31. *kahā laraite dṛga kare, pare lāl behāla |*  
*kahūrṇ muralī kahūrṇ pit paṭ, kahūrṇ mukuṭ banamāla ||*

What her messenger told her

Your bewitching  
sidelong glance  
has so dazed  
poor Kṛṣṇa  
that he lies in a swoon;  
his flute,  
yellow dress,  
coronet and  
garland,  
all in disarray.\*

32. *jasa apajasa dekhat nahīm, dekhat sārṇval gāt |*  
*kahā karaum lālica bhare, capala nain cali jāt ||*

What she said to her companion

Thirsting for his sight  
and braving reproach  
my restless glance  
goes to that dark handsome lad  
again and again.  
What can I do, friend,  
he captivates me so.\*

33. *nakh sikh rūpa bhare khare, tau māṁgat musukāni |  
tajat na locan lālaci ye lalacauhīm bāni ||*

What she said to her companion

Although my eyes have drunk  
the nectar of his beauty  
they'll not shake off  
their greed,  
and still beg from him  
a smile.\*

34. *chavai chigunī pahurīcau gahat, ati dinatā dikhāi |  
bali bāvan kau byaurīta suni, ko hari tumhaim patyāi ||*

What she said

Why should I go with you  
Kṛṣṇa?  
You feign innocence  
and exploit an opening  
to the full.  
After hearing how  
as Vāman, you tricked Bali,  
O handsome lad  
who'll ever trust you!\*

35. *nainā nairīku na mānahīm, kitau kahyau samujhāi |  
tana mana hāraimhūrī harīsaim, tin saurī kahā basāi ||*

What she said to her companion

What can I do friend,  
I've cautioned these eyes  
time and again  
but they pay no heed,  
and even after gambling away everything  
in love's game

they still keep smiling  
impudently!

36. *laṭaki laṭaki laṭakat, calat, daṭat mukuṭ ki chāṁha |*  
*caṭak bharyau naṭ mili gayo, aṭakabhāṭak-ban māṁha ||*

What she told her companions

I got lost  
in the winding forest pathways  
when a gorgeous acrobat  
wearing a coronet  
came swinging and swaying.  
Only with his help, friend,  
could I find my way!\*

37. *bilakhī ḍabkaumhaim cakhani, tiya lakhi gaman barāi |*  
*piya gahabari āye gare, rākhī gare lagāi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Seeing her distressed eyes  
brimful of tears  
his voice faltered,  
and wordlessly  
clasping her to his bosom  
he put off  
his departure.

38. *cit bit bacat na harata haṭhi, lālan dṛga barajora |*  
*sāvadhān ke baṭaparā, ye jāgat ke cora ||*

What she said to her companion

How can my mind  
remain with me  
when my lover's eyes  
stubbornly abduct it?  
They're like thieves and dacoits

who rob a man's wealth  
even though he's cautious  
and wide awake.\*

39. *pahurñcati ðaṭi rana subhaṭ laurñ, rauki sakairñ saba nāmhi |  
lākhanuhūrñ kī bhīr mairñ, ārñkhi uhīrñ cali jārñhi ||*

What her companion said to her

How brazenly  
you glance on your lover  
singling him out  
when he's in company.  
It's as though  
a warrior undaunted  
would cut his way  
across enemy soldiers  
to challenge his adversary.

40. *saras sumil cit turamg kī, kari kari amit uthānā |  
goi nibāhairñ jītiyai, kheli prema caugāna ||*

What the newly-wed woman's companion said to her

As a skilful polo player  
riding a docile and sturdy horse  
makes repeated dashes  
and pirating the ball  
wins the goal;  
so dear girl  
with heart steeped in love  
you should win him over  
with secret sallies.

41. *haṁsi haṁsi herati naval tiya, mad ke mad umadāti |  
balaki balaki bolati bacana, lalaki lalaki lapaṭāti ||*

What one of her companions said to another

That young woman  
drunkenly swayed,  
laughed,  
looked around, and  
mumbling,  
embraced her lover  
shamelessly  
over and over again.

42. *jahāṁ jahāṁ ṭhāṭhau lakhyau, syāma subhag siramauru |  
binahūrṁ un chin gahi rahat, drgana ajaurṁ vaha ṭhauru ||*

What one Braj belle said to another

Even though Kṛṣṇa,  
handsomest among men,  
has gone,  
for a moment it seems  
to the mind's eye  
he's there still  
where he used to stand.\*

43. *ḍiṭhi barat bāṁdhī aṭana, caṭhi dhāvat na ḍarāt |  
it ut tai cit duhunu ke, naṭ laurṁ āvat jāt ||*

What one of her companions said to another

The lovers gazed  
at each other  
from their balconies.  
Their glances  
were like a rope  
tied across,  
on which acrobat-like

their hearts ran  
to meet each other.

44. *jhamaki caṭhat utarati aṭā, nairṁku na thakāti deha ।  
bhaiḥ rahati naṭ ki baṭā, aṭaki nāgar neha ॥*

What one of her companions said to another

She swiftly climbed her balcony  
to glance at him  
but fearing prying eyes  
ran down the next minute  
not tiring a bit,  
as though she was a yoyo  
in her sweetheart's hand  
whirled up and down  
on the string of love!

45. *lobh lage hari rūpa ke, karī sāmṭ juri jāi ।  
haurṁ in bēcī bīc hīṁ, loin baṭī balāi ॥*

What she said to her confidante

My vexatious eyes  
irresistibly drawn  
to handsome Kṛṣṇa,  
are like a broker  
striking a deal  
without my consent  
and selling me off  
in return for the wealth of his beauty.\*

46. *cilak cikanai caṭak saurṁ, lafaṭi saṭak laurṁ āi ।  
nāri salonī sārivarī, nāgini laurṁ ḍasi jāi ॥*

What he said to her messenger

Ever since I saw  
that dark beauty,



vivacious, buoyant,  
lustrous, sleek,  
slender and sinuous;  
longing for her  
pains me  
as the bite  
of a she-cobra.

47. *jure duhun ke dṛga jhamaki, ruke na jhīne cīra |*  
*halakī fauj haraul jyaurī, parat gol par bhīra ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Like a sortie  
penetrating the enemy's  
weak vanguard  
and pressing on to  
the commander,  
his eager glance  
pierces her gossamer veil  
and engages her eyes.

48. *dṛga mihacat mṛgalocanī, bharyau ulaṭi bhuḥ bāth |*  
*jānī gaī tiya nāth ke, hāth<sup>2</sup> paras hīm hāth ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Standing behind her  
he covered her eyes;  
her hands went up to his  
and knowing  
by their very touch  
'twas her lover  
she stretched her arms back  
to clasp him.\*

49. *khin khin mair̃m khaṭakati su hiya, kharī bhīr mair̃m jāt |*  
*kahi ju call anahīr̃m citai, oṭhana hīr̃m bic bāt ||*

What he said to her companion

Though she did not glance my way  
in the thick crowd  
her lips moved silently  
as if she was trying  
to tell me something.  
Ever since  
I'm wondering each moment  
what it was  
she meant to say.\*

50. *naī lagani kula ki sakuci, bikal bhaī akulāī |*  
*duhūm ora aim̃cī phire, phirakī laur̃m dina jāī ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Her newborn love  
makes her yearn for her sweetheart  
and she sets out to meet him,  
but fear of family dishonour  
makes her turn back.  
Thus pulled both ways  
that tormented girl  
keeps going back and forth  
like a gyrating *phirakī*.\*

51. *it tair̃m ut ut tair̃m itai, china na kahūm ṭaharāī |*  
*jak na parati cakaī bhaī, phiri āvasi phiri jāī ||*

What one of her companions said to another

She ventures out  
to have a glimpse of him  
but fearing censure  
instantly returns,

going back and forth  
restlessly  
like a child's yoyo.

52. *nisi amdhīyāri nila paṭ, pahiri calī piya geḥa |*  
*kahau durāi kyom durai, dipasikhā sī deha ||*

What her companion said to her

You're going to your lover's house  
on this dark night  
dressed in blue  
to remain inconspicuous;  
but say, how can you hide  
your body's splendour  
which shines out  
like a lamp?

53. *rahyau dhitha dhārāsa gahe, sasihari gayau na sūr |*  
*muryau na mana muravāni cubhi, bhau cūrana capi cūr ||*

What he said to her companion

When I saw her lovely ankles  
my valiant heart  
unflinching  
remained transfixed to them  
till it was crushed to powder  
under her anklets!\*

54. *kiya hāila cit cāi lagi, baji pāil tuva paī |*  
*puni suni suni mukh madhura dhuni, kyom na lāl lalacāi ||*

What her companion said to her

When even the jingle  
of your ankle bells  
makes him long  
to meet you,

how much more  
will his yearning be  
when he hears  
your sweet voice?\*

55. *line hū sāhas sahas, kīne jatan hajāra |*  
*loin loin sindhu tana, pair na pāvat pāra ||*

What she said to her companion

Every time I look at him  
he seems handsomer.  
Like a venturesome swimmer  
my glance has dived deep  
into the ocean of his loveliness  
again and again,  
but it could never fathom it.\*

56. *nāha garaji nāhar garaj, bol sunāyau ṭeri |*  
*pharṁsi fauj mairṁ bandhi bic, harṁsi sabana tana heri ||*

Hearing her lover  
Kṛṣṇa  
roared like a lion  
challenging those on the battlefield;  
Rukmiṇī,  
encircled by soldiers,  
knew there was none  
to oppose him;  
and looking all round her  
smiled triumphantly.\*

57. *bāla belī sūkhī sukhad, ihim rūkhī rukh ghāma |*  
*pheri dahadhāhi kījiyai, suras sīrñci ghanasyāma ||*

What her companion said to him

Your indifference

Kṛṣṇa  
has made that charming girl  
lustreless.  
Give her your love  
and make her happy,  
reviving her  
as a cloud showers  
and makes green again  
a withering creeper.

58. *tajī sāṅk sakucati na cit, bolati bāka kubāka |*  
*din chanadā chāki rahati, chuṭat na chin chabi-chāka ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Drunk with his love  
night and day,  
his beauty's splendour  
so haunts her mind  
each moment,  
that, heedless of her elders,  
she keeps blurting out  
words  
she should not.

59. *phiri phiri bījhati kahi kahā, kahyau sām̐vare gāt |*  
*kahā karat dekhe kahār̐, alī calī kyaur̐m bāt ||*

What her companion (who had returned after meeting Kṛṣṇa,  
her lover) said

She asked me eagerly  
again and again,  
'Where did you meet Kṛṣṇa?'  
'What was he doing?'  
'What made him talk about me, and  
friend, what did he say?'

60. *rabi baṇḍau kar jori kai, ye sunat syāma ke bain /  
bhaye haṁsaumhain sabani ke, ati anakhaumhain nain ॥*

When Kṛṣṇa,  
who had stolen the clothes  
of the cowherd girls  
bathing in the nude,  
said,  
'Fold your hands  
and raise them  
to salute the sun',  
they could no longer  
keep feigning anger  
and glanced at him  
with smiling eyes.\*

61. *sovat jāgat supana basa, rasa risa caina kucaina |  
surati syāmaghan kī su rati, bisarāyehum bisarai na ॥*

What she said to her companion

Though I'm trying  
to banish Kṛṣṇa's remembrance  
from my mind, friend,  
his sweet ways of love  
perpetually haunt me,  
sleeping or awake,  
or dreaming;  
in joy, anger,  
repose, or agitation.\*

62. *dhare dhāra tehim dharat, dūje dhār dharaim na |  
kyaumhūm ānan ān saurī, nainā lāgat nai na ॥*

What he told his friend

She alone captivates me  
none else;

my love is constant,  
how can I even glance  
at another girl's face?\*

63. *man na dharat mero kahyau, tu āpane sayāna |*  
*ahe parani para prema kī, parahath pāri na prāna ||*

What her companion said

Dear girl,  
drunk with the vanity  
of your wisdom  
you do not heed my counsel;  
still I'll caution you  
not to surrender your heart  
to your lover  
if he wants to seize it  
by force.

64. *bhaumha umcaī āncara ulaṭi, mauri mori murṇha mori |*  
*nīṭhi nīṭhi bhītar gaī, ḍīṭhi ḍīṭhi saum jori ||*

What he said to his friend

Seeing me at her door  
she coyly arched her brow  
and with a toss of her head  
threw back her sari end  
baring her midriff.  
Then, fearing censure,  
she reluctantly went inside  
turning her face towards me,  
her eyes meeting mine  
as she went.

65. *rahi dahemṭī dhig dharī, bharī, mathaniyā bāri |  
pherati kari ulaṭi raī, nai bilovanihāri ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Her lover's coming  
so thrilled that milkmaid  
that the pot of curd near her  
remained as it was,  
and she started churning  
the water in the churning-pot  
with the churning-stick  
upside down!\*

66. *devar phūl hane ju su, su uṭhe haraṣi aṅg phūli |  
haṁsī karati oṣad sakhinu, deha dadorana bhūli ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Wherever the flowers,  
thrown playfully at her  
by her husband's younger brother  
who was her paramour,  
struck her,  
welts of joy  
appeared on her limbs!  
Mistaking them for insect-bites  
I hastened  
with the jar of ointment,  
but when she smiled  
I guessed the truth  
and stayed my hands.

67. *phule phudakat lai pharī, paḷ kaṭaccha karavāra |  
karat bacāvat biya nayan, pāyak ghāi hajāra ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Like nimble-foot soldiers



with sword and shield  
attacking and parrying,  
were the sweet insistence and denial  
of the myriad oblique glances  
the lovers threw each other  
under cover of their eyelids.

68. *laI saur̥ha sI sunani kI, taji muralI dhuni ān |*  
*kie rahati nit rāti dina, kānan lāge kān ||*

What one of her companions said to another

It seems she has vowed  
to listen to no other sound  
except that of Kṛṣṇa's flute.  
Day and night  
she strains her ears  
to catch their notes  
when he's piping  
in the forest.

69. *nIcI yai nIcI nipaṭ, dīṭhi kuḥI laur̥n dauri |*  
*uṭhi ūrhcai nIcau diyau, mana kulaṅg jhapi jhauri ||*

What he said to his friend

As a low flying hawk  
seeing a cuckoo  
rises aloft  
and suddenly sweeps down  
wringing his victim's neck;  
she lifted  
her lowered eyes  
and glancing at me,  
abashed, looked down again,  
enslaving my poor heart  
forever.\*

70. *sveda salil romāṇca kusa, gahi dulahl aru nāth |*  
*hiyau diyau saṅg hāth kai, hathalemain hīn hāth ||*

What one of her companions said to another

When their hands joined  
no sanctifying water was needed  
nor *kuśa* grass.  
By the sweat of their longing  
and their bristling body hair  
they sealed the union of their hearts  
even before  
they were man and wife.\*

71. *cit tarasat milat na banat, basi parosa kai bās |*  
*chāṭi phāṭi jāti suni, tāṭi oṭ usās ||*

What she said to her confidante

I pine for my lover  
but, alas, I can't meet him  
even though there's only  
a straw partition  
between our houses.  
When I hear  
his deep sighs of love  
from behind it,  
it seems as though  
my heart will break.

72. *jālarandha mag aṅgan kau, kachu ujās sau pāi |*  
*pīthi diye jagatyau rahyau, dīthi jharokhā lāi ||*

What his messenger said to her

Glancing  
through your casement  
when he chanced to see  
your lovely limbs,

he kept awake  
all night  
his eyes glued  
on the same spot  
hoping to catch  
another glimpse.\*

73. *par tiya doṣa purāna suni, lakhi mulaki sukhdāni |*  
*kasi kari rākhī miśraharṇ, murṇha āi musakāni ||*

What a woman, in the assembly of the teller  
of Paurāṇic tales, told her friend

Sitting in the assembly  
where her lover was telling  
Paurāṇic tales,  
she glanced at him  
with a meaningful smile  
when he began to relate  
a woman's seduction.  
Fearing a giveaway  
he suppressed  
the answering smile  
upon his lips.\*

74. *sahit saneh sakoc sukh, sveda kamp musikāni |*  
*prān pāni kari āpane, pāni dhare mo pāni ||*

What he said to his friend

Quivering with ecstasy  
ardent and loving,  
that bashful girl  
stole away my heart  
when she placed the betels  
in my hand.

75. *bhaye baṭāū nehu taji, bādi bakat bekāj |*  
*ab ali det urāhanau, ur upajati ati lāj ||*

What she said to her companion

You're upbraiding him in vain  
dear girl,  
he loves me no longer,  
and like a wayfarer  
pays me flying visits only.  
He's so little mine now  
that he's almost a stranger,  
and even to reproach him  
embarrasses me.

76. *diyau ju piya lakhi cakkan mairi, khelat phagu khiyāl |*  
*bārhatum ati pīr su na, kārhat banairi gulāl ||*

What one of her companions said to another

The red powder  
which he playfully sprinkled  
into her eyes  
in the *Phāga* festival  
made them smart greatly,  
but out of love for him  
she bore the agony  
and would not wash it out.\*

77. *āpu diyau mana pheri lai, palāṭe dīnhi pīṭhi |*  
*kaun cāla yaha rāvarī, lāl lukāvati dīṭhi ||*

What she said to taunt her faithless lover

After yourself giving me your heart  
lover,  
you've taken it away  
and turned your back on me!  
What has come over you

that you do not now  
even raise your eyes  
to glance at me?

78. *gopina saṁg nisi sarad kī, ramat rasika rasarāsa |*  
*lahācheha ati gatin kī, sabani lakhe saba pāsa ||*

What one of her companions said

Sporting with the milkmaids  
on an autumnal night  
Kṛṣṇa, the amorist,  
dances the *rāsa* dance.  
Dizzily he whirls  
round and round  
appearing to be with each girl  
at the same moment!\*

79. *syāma surati kari rādhika, takati taranijā tīra |*  
*aṁsuvana karati taraurṁsa kaurṁ, khinaku kharaurṁ haurṁ nīra ||*

What one of Rādhā's companions said to another

When memory of her lover, Kṛṣṇa,  
took Rādhā to the Yamunā bank  
where they used to make love,  
so great was the flood of her tears  
that for a moment  
the waters nearby  
turned salty!\*

80. *gopina ke aṁsuvana bharī, sadā asos apāra |*  
*ḍagar ḍagar nai hvai rahī, bagar bagar kairṁ bāra ||*

What Kṛṣṇa's friend told him on return from Mathurā

Grieved by your absence  
the tears of the milkmaids  
flow so copiously

that they form  
a perennial stream  
which flows through every lane  
and past every doorstep!

81. *ducitair̥ cit halati na calati, hamsati na jhukati bicāri |*  
*likhat citra piu lakhi citai, rahī citra laur̥ nāri ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Seeing him draw  
a girl's figure  
she came quietly along  
calm and unsmiling  
gazing uncertainly,  
as though herself a picture,  
and wondered,  
'Is it me he draws  
or another?'

82. *bhṛkuṭi-maṭakani pit-paṭ, caṭak laṭakati cāla |*  
*cala cakh citavani cor cit, liyau bihārīlāla ||*

What one of the milkmaids said to her companion

Kṛṣṇa's coquettish eyebrows  
his bright yellow garment  
swinging gait  
and bewitching eyes  
have captivated my heart, friend.\*

83. *citavani bhore bhāya kī, gore mukh musakāni |*  
*lāgani laṭaki ālī garair̥, cit khaṭakati nit āni ||*

What he said to his friend

The memory of her guileless glance  
and the smile on her fair face  
as she threw her arms

around her companion  
again and again,  
fill me, dear friend,  
with wistful yearning.

84. *hari-chabi-jala jabaterñ pare, tabaterñ chin bichuraim na |  
bharat dharat būrat tarat, rahamta-gharī laurñ nain ||*

What she told her confidante

Ever since I saw Kṛṣṇa  
my eyes are drenched  
in the waters of his love;  
they keep filling with tears  
shedding them  
swimming and drowning in them,  
like the pots of a water wheel  
moving in and out of the well.\*

85. *kyaumhu saha māt na lagai, thāke bhed upāya |  
hath dṛth gath gathbai su cali, lījai suraṅg lagāya ||*

What her companion said to him

I've tried many ways, dear lad,  
to placate her,  
but she'll not be appeased.  
Now you should breach  
the fortress of her obstinacy  
by the ardour of your love  
and take it by storm!

86. *gath racanā barunī alak, citavani bhaumha kamān |  
ādhu baṁkāihīm caṭhai, tarunī turaṅgam tāt ||*

What her companion said to her

The built of a fort  
an archer's bow

eyelashes and eyebrows  
waving tresses and  
a woman's oblique glance  
are best askew and arched,  
a horse looks stately  
when saddling raises his mane,  
even so, dear girl,  
don't bend too much  
lest easy winning  
make the prize seem light.

87. *aiṁcati sī citavani citai, bhaī oṭ alasāi |*  
*phiri ujhakani kauṁ mṛganayani, dṛgani laganiyā lāi ||*

What he told his friend

Glancing at me bewitchingly  
from her window  
that fawn-eyed girl  
lazily withdrew,  
deliberately leaving me  
standing at mine  
in the vain hope  
of catching her eyes again.

88. *chaṭan na paiyai chinaku basi, neha nagar yaha cāl |*  
*māryau phiri phiri māriyai, khūnī phirai khusyāl ||*

What she said to her confidante

Strange are the rules  
of love's land,  
he who enters it  
even for a moment  
is enslaved forever!  
Slain by killer Love  
he dies a thousand deaths  
while the slayer



wanders about merrily  
unpunished!\*

89. *jadapi cavāini cikani, calati cahūrṇ disi sain |*  
*taū na chāṇrat duhun ke, haṇsī rasīle nain ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Although tongues wag  
and eyebrows are raised  
all around them,  
they keep smiling at each other  
brazenly  
with ardent eyes  
whenever they meet.

90. *dṛgana lagat bedhat hiyahirṇ, bikal karat aṛḡ ān |*  
*ye tere saba tairṇ biṣam, ichan tichan bān ||*

What he said to her

Arrows wound  
only where they strike,  
but the pointed shafts  
of your sidelong glance  
though aimed at the eyes  
pierce the heart  
and pain every limb of mine  
with the ache of longing.

91. *chuṭat muṭhin saṅghim chuṭī, loka lāj kula cāl |*  
*lagai duhun ik ber hī, cal cit nain gulāl ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Family honour  
and fear of censure  
flew from them  
the moment the *gulāl*

flew from their fists.  
And when it touched  
their eyes  
their glances met  
and their restless hearts  
rushed together  
in blissful union.\*

92. *tiya kit kamanaiti pathi, bina jihi bhaumha kamāna |*  
*cal cit bejhaim cukati nahim, banka bilokani bāna ||*

What he said in her praise

Dear girl,  
from where have you learnt  
such wonderful archery  
that with the bow  
stringed only by your eyebrows  
you shoot arrows  
of oblique glances  
and with unerring aim  
pierce restless hearts?

93. *dr̥ga urajhat tūṭat kuṭum, jurati catura cit pr̥iti |*  
*parati gāmṭhi durajan hiyai, daī naī yaha r̥iti ||*

What she said to her confidante

Oh god  
how strange are love's ways;  
the eyes of lovers  
entangle  
but what snaps  
are family ties!  
Love's string joins  
tender minds  
but it's knotted

in hearts  
wicked and jealous!\*

94. *nipaṭ lajilī naval tiya, bahakī bārunī sēi |*  
*tyaurṁ tyaurṁ ati miṭhī lagati, jyaurn jyaurn dhūthyau dēi ||*

What her companion said to him

Her bashfulness  
has flown away  
on the fumes of  
inebriation,  
and her wantonness  
makes her more charming  
each moment.  
Hasten to her, lad,  
she'll receive you now  
with open arms.

95. *nain lage tihimlagani ju, na chūtaim chutaihūṁ prāna |*  
*kāma na āvat ekahūṁ, tere sauk samāna ||*

What she said to her companion

Our eyes have met  
and I dote on him, friend,  
even death  
can't part us now.  
Your countless admonitions  
though prudently given,  
are to no avail.

96. *utati guti lakhi lalan ki, aṅganā aṅganā mārṁha |*  
*baurī laurṁ daurī phirati, chuvat chabīlī chārṁha ||*

What one of her companions said to another

She's enamoured  
even of the shadow cast

in her courtyard  
by the kite  
her lover's flying,  
and runs about frenziedly  
chasing it!

97. *ūrhcaim citai sarāhiyat, girah kabūtaru let |*  
*jhalakit drga mulakit badan, tana pulakit kihim het ||*

What her companion said

Gazing aloft  
you're pointing out to me  
how admirably  
the pigeons are somersaulting  
in their flight.  
But by the sparkle in your eyes  
the rapture on your face  
and the thrills coursing through your body,  
I know you're enthralled  
not by the pigeons  
but by your lover who's flying them!

98. *lāgat kuṭil kaṭaccha sar, kyauri na hohim behāl |*  
*kaṭhat ji hiyaim dusāl kari, tāu rahat naṭāsāl ||*

What her messenger said to her

Why should not  
your sidelong glance  
torment him?  
It's like an arrow  
shot obliquely  
which, even after piercing the heart  
through and through,  
leaves agonizing fragments  
of its arrowhead.

99. *ve thārthe umadāu ut, jala na bujhai batavāgi |*  
*jāhīm saurī lāgyau hiyau, tāhī ke hiya lāgi ||*

What her companion said to her

Look!  
there your lover stands  
and it's he  
who'll appease your longing.  
Twine your arms  
round him  
with whose heart  
your heart is twined,  
what will you get  
by hugging me?  
Has water ever been known  
to put out  
a submarine fire?

100. *chinaku calati thahthakati chinaku, bhuj prItam gal dāri |*  
*cathī aṭā dekhati ghaṭā, bijjuchaṭā-sī nāri ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Her arms twined round  
her lover's neck  
she stands on her balcony  
watching the rising clouds.  
Rapturously  
she moves a step one moment  
and the next  
coquettishly stops.

101. *Iarikā laibe kaim mīsanu, laṅgaru mo dhig āi |*  
*gayau acānak āṅguri, chatiyām chail chuvāi ||*

What she said to her confidante

Pretending to take

the baby from my arms  
that audacious lad  
came up to me,  
and craftily  
brushing my breasts  
with his fingers,  
went away.

102. *kori jatan kijai taū, nāgar neha durai na |*  
*kahai det cit cīkanau, nai rukhāi nain ||*

What her companion said to her

You may try a million ways  
but you can't hide  
your love for him;  
friend, it reveals itself  
despite  
the feigned indifference  
your glances  
have suddenly acquired.

103. *kālabūt dūti binā, jurai na ān upāya |*  
*phiri tāke t̥āre banai, pāke prema ladāya ||*

An arch  
cannot be built  
without a substructure  
for support  
till it's strong enough  
to stand on its own,  
so love cannot germinate  
without a go-between,  
but when it has taken root  
she's no longer needed.\*

104. *nāsā mori nacāi dṛga, karī kakā kī saurṇha |*  
*kāmte si kasakati hiya, garī katill bhaurṇha ||*

What he told his friend

Finding her alone  
I made advances.  
She knitted her brows  
wrinkled her nose  
and swore by her uncle  
she'd not have me;  
but her coquettish glances  
were a giveaway.  
Her sweet blandishments, friend,  
fill me with aching desire  
as the pain  
of a thorn embedded.

105. *kyaum basiṇai kyaum nibahiṇai, nīti neha-pur nāhīn |*  
*lagālāgi loin karaiṇ, nāhak mana barṇdhi jāhīn ||*

What he said to his friend

How can one live  
how survive  
in this lawless land of love,  
where the eyes steal glances  
but it is the innocent heart  
which is shackled?

106. *tyaurṇ tyaurṇ pyāseī rahat, jyaurṇ jyaurṇ pivat aghāi |*  
*saguna salone rūpa kī, ju na cakḥ tṛṣā bujhāi ||*

What her companion said to her

As drinking brackish water  
makes one thirstier,  
the more I look on my lover

the greater my longing  
to keep on gazing.

107. *prītam dṛga mīcat priyā, pāni-paras sukh pāi |*  
*jāni pichāni ajāna laum, naika na hoti janāi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

He came from behind  
and blindfolded her eyes  
with his palms.  
Though she knew 'twas him  
by his caress,  
she feigned ignorance  
to prolong its pleasure.

108. *dekhyo jāgati vaisiyai, sārṅkar lagi kapāt |*  
*kit hvai āvat jāt bhajī, ko jānai kihim bāt ||*

What she told her companion

Dreaming of my lover  
I took him for real, friend,  
and bolted the door!  
When 'twas morning  
I found the bolt still on.  
It makes me wonder  
which is the way he came  
and went!

109. *karu uṭhāye ghūṁghat karat, usarat paṭ-gujhroṭ |*  
*sukh-moṭaim lūṭim lalan, lakhi lalanā ki loṭ ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Seeing her lover  
when she raised her hand  
and pulled her veil down,  
her upper garment



shifted up.  
Her triple folds  
thus bared  
were stolen pleasure  
for his enraptured gaze.\*

110. *vei kar byaurani vahai, byaurau kaun bicāra |  
jinahīm urjhyau mo hiyau, tinahīm surajhe bāra ||*

What she thought in her mind

These hands  
are like those  
of the barber's wife  
and so's the manner of their settling my hair,  
but why do they thrill me  
with their touch?  
It seems he  
with whom my heart is tangled  
is untangling my tresses.\*

111. *rahi na sakyau kasa kari rahyau, bas kari līnau māra |  
bhedi dusāra kiyau hiyau, tana duti bhediśāra ||*

What he said to her messenger

I tried my best  
to hold myself back  
but at last  
Kāma has subdued me.  
My poor heart  
has been completely rent  
by her body's splendour  
as though pierced by an auger  
through and through!

112. *khal baṭhai bal kai thakai, kaṭai na kubat kuṭhāra |*  
*ālabāla-ur jhālari, kharī prema taru dāra ||*

What she told her confidante

As a woodcutter  
vainly trying to chop  
a spreading tree branch,  
are the evil tongues  
of those who revile me.  
Despite this, friend,  
his love implanted in my heart  
grows each moment  
more and more.

113. *unakau hita unahīm banai, koū kare aneka |*  
*phirat kākagokul bhayau, duhūm deha jyauṁ eka ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Their love is more ardent  
than anyone else's,  
for though separate in body  
their souls are one,  
as the pupil of a crow's eyes  
which keeps moving  
from one socket to the other.\*

114. *ali in loin saran kau, kharāu viṣam sañcāra |*  
*lagāim lagāim eka se, duhuvan karat sumāra ||*

What she said to her companion

Wonderful must be  
the arrows  
of my glances, friend,  
to wound  
one who shoots them

as much  
as the one they strike!\*

115. *karat jāt jeti kaṭana, baṛhi rasa-sarītā sot |*  
*ālābāla-ur prema-taru, titau titau dṛṭha hot ||*

The counsel her companions gave her

Do not be so restless  
to meet your lover, friend,  
for as the river's waters  
cutting the bank  
nourish trees to sturdiness  
with added vigour,  
the waters of severance  
will give strength  
to love's plant  
sprouting in the heart.

116. *mana na manāvat kauṁ karai, det ruṭhāi ruṭhāi |*  
*kautik lāgyau pyau priyā, khijhahum rijhavati āi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Even her petulance  
captivates him,  
so instead of speaking  
words of endearment  
he keeps provoking her!

117. *calat ghairu ghar ghar taū, gharī na ghar ṭhaharāi |*  
*samujhi uhlīm ghar kauṁ calai, bhūl uhlīm ghar jāi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Although all her neighbours  
frown on her  
she does not care  
and stays not a moment

at home;  
on purpose  
or of themselves  
her feet always turn  
towards her lover's house.

118. *māryau manuhārīna bhārī, gāryau kharī mīthāhīn |*  
*vākau atī anakhāhaṭau, musakāhaṭ bina nāhīn ||*

What he said to her companion

Her chastisement is captivating  
her tirades honeyed words,  
her angry frowns  
are as bewitching  
as her smiles!

119. *mair̥m yaha tohīr̥m mair̥m lakhī, bhagatī apūrab bāla |*  
*lahi prasāda-mālā ju bhau, tana kadamba kī mālā ||*

What the temple priest said to her

Lady,  
what remarkable devotion  
you have,  
that your body thrills  
with ecstasy  
on receiving this garland  
as *prasāda*!\*

120. *batarasa-lālaca lāl kī, muralī dharī lukāī |*  
*saur̥mha karai bhaum̥hana haṁsair̥m, daina kahai naṭī jāī ||*

What one of her companions told another

She hid Kṛṣṇa's flute  
and each time he asked her  
she swore denial  
with a twinkling eye

so that he'd ask again;  
thus she made him speak on  
just to savour the charm  
of his sweet words!

121. *rahau guhī benī lakhyo, guhibe ke tyaunār |*  
*lage nīra cucāna je, nīthi sukhāye bār ||*

What she said to him

Leave off lover,  
look how you're braiding  
my hair.  
Your caressing hands  
are making them perspiring wet  
after all the trouble  
I've taken  
to dry them!

122. *rahyau moha milanau rahau, yaurn kahi gahairn maror |*  
*ut dai sakhihirn urāhanau, it citāl mo or ||*

What he told his confidant

The moment I came  
she began to bitterly chide  
her companion, saying  
'Your long absence, friend,  
shows how much  
you care for me!'  
But by her covert glance  
I knew  
'twas me she meant.

123. *neku utai uṭhi baiṭhiyai, kahā rahe gahi gehu |*  
*chuṭī jāti namhadi chinaku, namhadi sūkhan dehu ||*

What her companion said to him

What makes you  
 so housebound, lad?  
 When she sees you near  
 her ardour  
 makes her perspire  
 dampening again  
 the henna paste  
 on her nails.  
 Go and sit  
 somewhere else awhile  
 and give it a chance  
 to dry up.\*

124. *haum hiya rahati haī chāī, naī juguti jaga joya |*  
*āṛnkhi āṛnkhi lage kharī, deha dūbarī hoyā ||*

What she said to her confidante

How strange have turned  
 the ways of the world, friend,  
 'twas my eyes  
 which clashed with his  
 but what took the punishment  
 was my poor body  
 wasting away!

125. *jyaum jyaum ujhaki jhāṛpati badan, jhukati bihaṁsi satarāī |*  
*tyaum tyaum gulāl-muṭhī jhuthī, jhajhākavat pyau jāī ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Though there was no *gulāl*  
 in his fist  
 he feigned there was,

and the more she fought shy of it—  
stooping,  
hiding her face in her sari,  
looking annoyed—  
the more he teased her,  
pretending  
to throw the powder  
in her eyes!\*

126. *aṅgurina uci bharu bhīti dai, ulaṭi citai cakh lol |*  
*ruci saurṇ duhūrṇ duhūrṇna ke, cūme cāru kapol ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Standing on tiptoe  
and throwing their weight  
on the wall  
between their balconies,  
they glanced furtively all around  
with restless eyes,  
and leaning forward  
kissed.\*

127. *mosaurṇ milavati cāturi, turṇ nahim bhānati bheu |*  
*kahe det yaha pragaṭ hīm, pragaṭyau pūs paseu ||*

What her companion said to her

I won't be taken in  
by your pretences,  
for the sweat  
glistening on your body  
in this cold *Pūs* month  
clearly reveals  
your secret love for him.\*

128. *rasa bhijaye doṁ duhuni, tau tiki rahe țaraim̐ na |*  
*chabi saum̐ chirakat prema raṁg, bhari picakārī nain ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Though surfeited with love  
they're exchanging covetous glances,  
as though *Holi* revellers  
even though soaked  
should go on spraying  
jets of coloured water  
on each other  
with their syringes!\*

129. *kāre baran țarāvane, kat āvat ihm̐ geha |*  
*kai vā lakhī sakhi lakhaim̐, lage tharaharā deha ||*

What she told her companion

I wonder why  
this hideous dark-hued man  
comes to my house.  
Friend, I've seen him often here,  
and each time  
the sight of him  
makes me tremble.\*

130. *citavati jitavati hita hiye, kiye tirlche nain |*  
*bhije tana doṁ karhpaim̐, kyaurmhūm̐ japa nibarai na ||*

What one of her companions said to another

While they stand in the river  
offering prayers  
they exchange oblique glances.  
Even though they're soaked  
and shivering,  
they're so greedy



for each other's sight  
that they keep on praying!

131. *kiyau ju cibuk uthāi kai, kampit kara bharatāra |*  
*ṭerhiyaim ṭerhī phirati, ṭerhaim tilak lilāra ||*

What one of her companions said to another

He raised her chin  
to adorn her brow  
with a *tilak*,  
but his ardour  
made his hand tremble  
and he could not put it straight.  
She goes about now  
proudly showing off  
that crooked mark!\*

132. *dhorī lāl sunan kī, kahi gorī musukāt |*  
*thorī thorī sakuci saum, bhorī bhorī bāt ||*

What her messenger said to him

When the artless talk  
and the bashful smiles  
of that fair girl  
keep even me, a woman,  
spellbound,  
how much more, dear lad,  
will they captivate you!\*

133. *āj kachū aurai bhaye, naye chaye thikaṭhain |*  
*cit ke hita ke cugal ye, nit ke hohim na nain ||*

What her companion said to her

The new gleam  
of ecstasy  
in your eyes today

eloquently reveals  
the secret love  
which has blossomed  
in your heart.

134. *chuṭahi na lāj na lālacau, pyau lakhi naihar-geha |*  
*saṭapaṭāt locana khare, bhare sakoc saneha ||*

What one of her companions said to another

When she saw her husband arrive  
at her mother's house,  
she was torn between  
ardour and bashfulness,  
and cast on him  
an agitated glance.

135. *samarasa samara sakoc bas, bibasa na ṭhik ṭhaharāi |*  
*phiri phiri ujhakati phiri durati, duri duri ujhakati āi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Thirsting for his sight  
she stood on tiptoe  
to peer at him  
from her casement window,  
but her modesty  
made her withdraw again.  
Thus veering between  
longing and bashfulness,  
she kept glancing  
and looking away  
by turns.

136. *doū cora-mihīcanī, khela na kheli aghāt |*  
*durat hiyaiṁ lapaṭāi kai, chuvat hiyaiṁ lapaṭāt ||*

What one of her companions said to another

She never tires  
of playing blind man's buff  
when her lover is there,  
for every time they hide  
or touch each other,  
they can ardently embrace.\*

137. *misi hīm misi ātap dusaha, dāī aur baharāi |*  
*cale lalan manabhāvatī, tana kī chāmha chipāi ||*

What one of her companions told another

He excused himself, saying  
'The sun is too hot';  
and when the other girls had gone  
he drew his sweetheart  
into the mantle of his shadow  
and took her to the woods.

138. *rahi acal si hvai manau, likhī citra si āhi |*  
*tajai lāj daru loka kau, kahau bilokati kāhi ||*

What her companion said

Who is that man, friend,  
at whom you're staring  
spellbound  
as though rooted to the spot,  
without a care  
for what people around  
might say?\*

139. *pala na calaiṁ jakī sī rahi, thakī sī rahi usās |*  
*abahiṁ tana ritayau kahau, mana paṭhayau kihiriṁ pās ||*

What her companion said to her

You're staring fixedly at him  
with startled eyes  
and sighing ardently:  
it almost seems  
your heart is no longer  
in your body.

If you are not infatuated  
with this lad  
say, to whom  
have you surrendered  
your heart?

140. *kare cāha saum̐ cuṭaki kai, kharai ūraum̐haiṁ main |*  
*lāj navāyaim̐ tarapharat, karat khūṁd sī nain ||*

What one of her companions said to another

As a whip's snap  
drives a horse forward  
but the rein's tug  
restrains him,  
so that he keeps restlessly prancing  
where he is;  
Kāma goads her glance  
on to her lover  
but her modesty holds it back:  
thus torn between  
desire and bashfulness  
her eyes keep quivering  
agitatedly.\*

141. *jyaurn̄ jyaurn̄ āvati nikaṭ̄ nisi, tyaurn̄ tyaurn̄ kharī utāla |*  
*jhamaki jhamaki ṭahalaim̄ karai, lagī rahacaṭaim̄ bāla ||*

What one of her companions said to another

As night approaches  
yearning for her lover  
mounts,  
and she hurries through  
her chores,  
so that she can hasten  
to meet him.

142. *doū cāha bhare kachū, cāhat kahau kahaim̄ na |*  
*nahim̄ jāncak̄ sunī sūma laurn̄, bāhir nikasat̄ baina ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Bursting with desire  
the lovers yearned to speak  
but bashfulness stayed them,  
and the words  
froze on their lips  
as a miser  
rooted to his house  
when he learns  
a beggar's at the door!

143. *cit dai dekhi cakor tyaurn̄, tījaim̄ bhajai na bhūkh |*  
*cinagi cugaim̄ aṅgāra ki, cugaim̄ ki canda mayūkh ||*

What she said to her companion

Like the *cakor*  
which, even when starving,  
will only feast on moonbeams  
or swallow embers,  
I will keep gazing  
on his moonlike face

or else burn away  
in separation's fire;  
but I can never love  
another.\*

144. *nakh-ruci-cūran ḍāri kai, ṭhag lagāi nij sāth |*  
*rahyau rākhi haṭhi lai gayau, hathāhathi mana hāth ||*

What he said to his friend

Despite all my wariness  
she enslaved me  
with the fascinating beauty  
of her hands.

Thug-like  
she sprinkled on me  
the powder of enchantment  
and in a moment  
took my heart away.\*

145. *surati na tāla ru tāna ki, uṭhyau na suru ṭhaharāi |*  
*ai ri rāga bigāri gau, bairi bola sunāi ||*

What she said to her confidante

As soon as I heard his voice  
the melody froze on my lips  
and I forgot  
both the note and the tune.  
The coming of my charming lover  
arrested my song.\*

146. *ur urajhau citacora saum, guru guruhana ki lāja |*  
*carhairm himḍoraim saim hiyaim, kiyaime banai grha kāja ||*

What one of her companions said to another

She yearns for him  
but can't disclose her love

because of the elders  
of the family.  
As she goes about  
doing her daily chores  
she keeps wavering  
between ardour and bashfulness  
as though moving to and fro  
on a swing.

147. *mairi lakhi nāri jñāna, kari rākhyau niradhāru yaha |*  
*vahi roga nidhāna, vahai baida auṣadi vahai ||*

What her confidante said to her

As a *vaidya*  
can find out the ailment  
by just feeling the pulse,  
I know you suffer  
from the age-long disease of love.  
Your lover alone  
is your physician  
and union with him  
your only medicine!\*

148. *bheṭat banai na bhāvatau, cit tarasat ati pyār |*  
*dharat lagāi lagāi ur, bhūṣan basan hathyār ||*

What one of her companions said to another

She yearns for him  
but her bashfulness  
prevents her going  
to where he sits  
with the elders  
of the family:  
so she assuages her craving  
by lovingly clasping  
again and again

the ornaments  
arms and dress  
he has cast off.

149. *nāvak sara so lāikairi, tilaku taruni it tāmki |*  
*pāvak jhar sī jhamaki kai, gai jharokhā jhāmki ||*

What he said to her companion

Flashing like a tongue of flame  
that young woman  
peeped through her casement window,  
and wounding me  
with the dart of her glance  
turned away.\*

150. *bāma bāhu pharakat milai, jau hari jivanamūri |*  
*tau tohri saum bhetihauri, rākhi dāhiri dūri ||*

What she said

My right arm throbs  
presaging the return  
of Kṛṣṇa, my beloved.  
I'll reward it  
if he comes  
by keeping my left arm away  
when I embrace him!\*

151. *ihiṁ basant na khari ari, garam na sital bāt |*  
*kahi kyaum jhalake dekhiyat, pulaki pasije gāt ||*

What her companion said to her

It's spring, dear girl,  
when the breeze  
is not too warm or cold:  
it can only be  
his presence



which thrills you,  
so that all in a moment  
you're shivering  
and bathed in sweat!

152. *rahi munha pheri ki heri it, hita samuhau cit nāri |*  
*ḍīthi parasi uṭhi pīthi kai, pulakem kahaim pukāri ||*

What her companion said to her

It's no use  
turning your face away, friend,  
to hide your love,  
for his ardent glance  
makes even your back  
tremble so uncontrollably  
that it's plain as day!

153. *lahi sūnaim ghar karu gahat, dikhādikhī ki īthi |*  
*gaī sucit nāhim karati, kari lalacaurmhīm ḍīthi ||*

What he told her companion

Though I hardly knew her,  
when I found her alone one day  
in her house  
I caught her hand  
and drew her to me.  
She refused, saying 'no',  
but her ardent eyes  
and her seductive glance  
are forever embedded  
in my memory.

154. *piya kair̥ṁ dhyāna gahI gahI, rahI vahI hvai nāri |*  
*āpu āpu hīm ārasI, lakhi rijhati rijhavāri ||*

What one of her companions said to another

She dotes on him so much  
that when she looked into the mirror  
the poor fool imagined  
herself to be the lover,  
and remained fascinated  
with her own reflection!

155. *kab kI dhyāna lagI lakhyaum, yah gharu lāgihai kāhi |*  
*dariyatu bhr̥ṅgI kiṭ laum, jina vahaI hvai jāhi ||*

What her companion said to her

Your mind's always with your lover, friend,  
if you keep on like this  
who'll look after the household?  
You remain so engrossed in him  
I fear  
one day you might,  
like the *bhr̥ṅgI* insect,  
cease being yourself  
and take on his form!\*

156. *jhuki jhuki jhapakaun̄haim̄ palani, phiri phiri juri jamuhāi |*  
*bir̄ṁḍi piyāgam n̄r̄ṁḍ m̄is̄i, d̄ir̄ṁ saba alI uṭhāi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

As the moment  
of her lover's arrival neared  
she nodded sleepily  
as though tired  
and yawned and stretched  
again and again,  
so that, taking the hint,

all her companions left  
leaving her alone.

157. *dukhahāini caracā nahīm, ānan ānan ān |*  
*lagī phirati dhūkā diye, kānan kānan kân ||*

What she told her lover who wanted to take  
her to the woods

I fear to come with you, lover,  
for these accursed  
scandal-mongering women  
have nothing else to talk about  
save our affair.  
They keep prying  
even in the woods,  
all eyes and ears  
for something which can make  
their tongues wag.

158. *gaī kuṭum kī bhīr mairi, rahi baiṭhi dai pīṭhi |*  
*taū palak parijāti it, salaj hasaurihīm diṭhi ||*

What he said to her companion

Though she sat amidst  
the members of her family  
with her back to me,  
she now and again  
stole an abashed glance  
and smiled.

159. *naurī sunat hīm hvai gayau, tana aurai mana aur |*  
*dabai nahīm cit carhi rahyau, abai cathāyairi tyaur ||*

What her companion said  
His name acted like magic on you

and you were wholly transformed.  
Your love, dear girl,  
can't now be hid  
however much  
you knit your brows.

160. *digat pāni ḍagulāti giri, lakṣi saba braj behāl |*  
*kampi kisori darasi kai, kharairṁ lajāne lāl ||*

While Kṛṣṇa held up the Goverdhana Mount

his glance fell on Rādhā,  
and her sight so thrilled him  
that his hand trembled  
making the hill shake:  
but when he saw  
the alarmed faces of the Braj folk  
he looked down with bashful eyes.\*

161. *ihiṁ kāmṭairṁ mo pāi gari, līnī marat jivāi |*  
*priti janāvat bhīti saurṁ, mīt ju kāthyau āi ||*

What she told her confidante

The thorn which got into my foot  
became my life's saviour,  
for just then  
the lad whom I adored  
came that way  
and he took it out so fondly  
that I knew  
he returned my love  
and I was saved  
of dying of grief.\*

162. *nāmk cathai sibi karai, jitai chabilli chail |*  
*phiri phiri bhūli vahai gahai, pyau karṇkarill gail ||*

What one of her companions said to another

That lovely belle  
looked so charming  
when she turned up her nose  
and hissed her disapproval,  
that the oftener she did it  
the more he walked barefoot  
on the rough gravelled path!\*

163. *lāj lagām na mānahim, nainā mau basa nāhim |*  
*ye munhajora turaṅg laurṇ, aimcatahūm cala jāhim ||*

What she said to her companion who cautioned  
her not to look at him so often

My eyes are not in my control, friend;  
throwing caution to the winds  
they shamelessly keep glancing  
at my lover  
like runaway horses  
which can't be curbed  
however hard  
the reins are pulled.

164. *kari mundari ki arasi, pratibimbit pyau pāi |*  
*pīṭhi diyairṇ nidharak lakhai, ikatak dīṭhi lagāi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Though her back  
was towards him  
that audacious girl  
caught her lover's reflection  
in the mirror

set in her ring  
and kept staring at it fixedly.\*

165. *itī bhīrahūṁ bhedi kai, kitaū hvai it āī |*  
*phirai dīṭhi juri dīṭhi saurṁ, sabakī dīṭhi bacāī ||*

What he said to his confidant

Sweeping the crowd  
her piercing glance  
surreptitiously  
joins mine  
for a moment,  
before it sweeps back  
again.

166. *lāī lāl bilokiyai, jiya kī jīvan mūlī |*  
*rahī bhaun ke kona main, sonajuhl-sī phūlī ||*

What his woman messenger said

Dear lad  
I've brought you this charming girl  
precious to you as life;  
there she stands  
in the corner of the house  
resplendent  
as a yellow jasmine flower.

167. *nekau uhi na judī karī, haraṣī ju dī tum māl |*  
*ur taim bās chuṭyau nahim, bās chuṭai hū lāl ||*

What her messenger told him

She prizes so much  
the garland  
you fondly gave her, dear lad,  
that it does not leave her bosom  
though its perfume has left!

168. *bihamsi bulai biloki ut, prautha tiyā rasaghūmi |  
pulaki pasijati pūt kau, piya cūmyau mukh cūmi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Seeing her husband  
who was sitting with elders  
kiss his child,  
that wanton woman  
yearned for a kiss too,  
and calling the child to her  
kissed him instead;  
and bathed with the sweat of longing,  
bristling with desire,  
she threw her husband  
a meaningful glance.

169. *dekhyau anadekhyau kiyau, amga amga sabai dikhāi |  
paiṭhati sī tana mairi sakuci, baiṭhi citai lajāi ||*

What he said to his confidant

Though she glanced at me  
she feigned to take no notice,  
but at the same time  
bared her limbs to my sight,  
and then sat shyly  
as though shrinking from shame.

170. *sunī paga dhuni citayau itai, nhāti diyairi hī piṭhi |  
caki jhuki sakuci ḍari, hamsi laji sī ḍiṭhi ||*

What he said to his friend

When I chanced upon her  
bathing in the pond  
the sound of my footsteps  
made her look back,  
and when her startled gaze met mine

she stooped  
to bashfully hide her breasts  
and looked timorously all round:  
then seeing  
we were alone  
she shyly glanced at me  
and smiled.

171. *gayo kampi kachu kachu rahai, kar pasiji lapaṭāi |  
laiyau muṭhī gulāl bhari, chuṭati jhuṭhī hvai jāi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

So greatly did they thrill and perspire  
with the ardour of their love  
that some of the *gulāl* powder  
dropped from their trembling hands  
and the rest got stuck  
to their moist palms,  
so that when they opened their fists  
to throw it on each other  
they found it all gone!\*

172. *dekhat kachu kautuk itai, dekhau nairnka nihāri |  
kab kī ikaṭak ḍaṭī rahī, ṭaṭiyā aṅgurina phāri ||*

What her companion said to him

Do you see  
this marvel, lad?  
Just look!  
Your beloved stands motionless  
parting the curtain of her window  
with her fingers,  
staring fixedly at you  
with ardent eyes.



173. *cakī jakī si hvai rahī, būjhaim bolati nīthī |*  
*kahūm dīthī lāgi lagi, kai kāhū kī dīthī ||*

What one of her companions said to another

She appears to be lost  
to the world,  
and startled;  
and when one asks her  
why she's so  
she answers not a word:  
it's evident she's in love,  
or maybe  
her bewitching beauty  
has caught the evil eye.

174. *dūryau khare samīp kau, let māni mani mod |*  
*hot duhun ke dṛgana nīrṇ, batarasa haṁsī binod ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Even while standing  
far apart  
they're savouring  
the bliss of nearness,  
for their eyes  
twinkling with joy  
speak out  
the ecstasy of their love.

175. *mukhi ughāri piu lakhi rahat, rahyau na gau misa sain |*  
*pharake oṭha uṭhe pulak, gaye ughari juri nain ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Covering herself  
she lay on the bed  
her eyes closed,  
feigning sleep:

but when he came  
and uncovered her face  
she was so transported with bliss  
that her lips quivered,  
and opening her eyes  
she threw on him  
a longing glance.

176. *nahim anhāi nahim jāi ghar, cit cihurṇtyau taki tīr |*  
*parasi phuraharī lai phirati, bihaṁsati dhaṁsati na nīr ||*

What one of her companions said to another

While bathing in the pond  
when she saw her lover come  
to the water's edge  
her eyes remained glued to him,  
and she trembled  
with the ecstasy of love:  
but throwing him a smile  
she pretended 'twas the cold  
that made her shiver,  
and waded across to join him  
without taking a dip.

177. *saṭapaṭāti sī sasimukhī, mukh ghūṁghaṭ paṭ dhāmki |*  
*pāvaka jhar sī jhamaki kai, gaī jharokhā jhāmki ||*

What he said to her messenger

That moon-faced beauty  
timidly drew her veil  
and peering from within it  
as a tongue of flame,  
swiftly flashed me a quick smile  
through her casement window.

178. *rūpa-sudhā-āsava chakyau, āsava piyat banai na |  
pyālau oṭha priyā badan, rahyau lagāye nain ||*

What one of her companions said to another

When he saw her  
the nectar of her beauty  
so intoxicated him  
that his lips stayed  
on the cup of wine,  
and he kept staring at her  
spellbound.

179. *kiṭi na gokul kulabadhū, kâhi na ko sikh dīna |  
kaunairiṁ taji na kula-gali, hvai murali sur lina ||*

What she said to her companion

Why preach at me alone?  
Who's the virtuous woman  
in Gokul  
who has not thrown  
family honour to the winds  
on hearing  
the enchanting notes  
of Kṛṣṇa's flute?\*

180. *jadapi suṁdara sughara puni, sagunau dipak deha |  
taū prakāsa karai titau, bhariyai jitai saneha ||*

What his woman messenger told the reluctant girl

You may be endowed  
with loveliness and virtue  
but without love  
in your heart  
you'll be devoid  
of all splendour;  
as an ornate lamp

with an excellent wick  
can yet give no light  
without oil.

181. *in dukhiyā amkhiyāna kaurṇ, sukh sirajyauḥ nāṁhi |  
dekhat banai na dekhatai, anadekhairṇ akulāṁhi ||*

What she said to her confidante

Happiness  
simply does not exist  
for these wretched eyes of mine.  
When he's before me  
they can't look at him  
for bashfulness,  
and when he has gone  
they're restless  
for his sight!

182. *cirajīvau jorī jurai, kyaurn na saneha gambhīr |  
ko ghaṭi ye vṛṣabhānujā, ve haladhar ke bīr ||*

What one of Rādhā's companions said to another

How can you expect  
their love to last, friend,  
for is not Rādhā  
daughter of the fiery Sun  
in Taurus;  
and Kṛṣṇa  
brother of Balarāma,  
who's no other  
than headstrong Śeṣanāga?\*

183. *aurai gati aurai bacan, bhayau badan rang aur |*  
*dyausak tairn piya cit carhi, kahairn cathairn hun tyaur ||*

What her companion said

I know he has started  
returning your love  
from a couple of days:  
it's no use knitting your brows  
to hide it from me, friend,  
for the spring in your gait  
the animation in your voice  
and your face's sparkle  
are a dead giveaway.

184. *puche kyaurn rukhl parati, sagibagi gal saneha |*  
*manamohana chabi par kafl, kahe karhtyanl deha ||*

What her companion said to her

You may answer me dryly  
when I ask you  
why you're bathed with sweat,  
but your body thrilling all over  
clearly betrays  
your rapture  
on seeing that handsome lad.\*

185. *muraha dhovati etl ghasati, hamsati anangavati tira |*  
*dhamsati na indivara-nayani, kalindi ke nira ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Sitting by the Yamunā bank  
that lotus-eyed girl  
unhurriedly washed her face  
and rubbed her heels clean,  
but delayed to enter the river  
to bathe,

so that she could gaze longer  
at her lover  
who was looking on.

186. *bathati nikasi kuc kor ruci, kaṭhat gaur bhujamūla |*  
*mana luṭigau loṭan caṭhat, corṇaṭat ūmce phūla ||*

What he said to her companion

While gathering flowers in the woods  
when she raised her hands  
to pick the topmost blossoms,  
my glance was rivetted  
to her nipples  
spilling out of her bodice,  
and her fair shoulders bared  
from her mantle slipping down;  
and when I saw  
the triple folds above her waist  
my heart was lost to her  
forever.\*

187. *parasat poṃchat lakhi rahat, lagi kapol kairi dhyāna |*  
*kar lai pyau pāṭal bimal, pyāri pathaye pān ||*

What her confidante told her companion

He took the rose sent by her  
and calling to mind  
her lovely cheeks  
caressed it  
wiped it carefully  
and stared long at it.  
In return  
he sent her  
betels.\*

188. *kaibā āvat ihm̐ gali, rahaum̐ calāi calaim̐ na |  
darasan̐ ki sādhai rahai, sūdhe rahaim̐ na nain ||*

What the shy girl told her confidante

My lover often passes  
through this lane  
but though I long for his sight  
I can't see him;  
for whenever my yearning glance  
speeds on to him  
bashfulness gets in the way  
and stops it from reaching!

189. *besari mott̐ dhani tuhīm̐, ko būjhai kula jāti |  
pibau kari tiya oṭha kau, rasa nidharak̐ dina rāti ||*

What he said

You alone are fortunate  
O nose-ring pearl,  
for even though you come  
from the lowly oyster  
you can dauntlessly caress  
those lips of hers  
which I,  
despite my noble birth,  
can't kiss even once!\*

190. *tiya mukh̐ lakhi hīrā jarī, berndī barhai binod |  
suta saneha mānau liyau, bidhu pūran̐ budhu god ||*

What her companion said to him

Go to her this moment lad,  
you'll be enraptured  
for she's wearing  
her lovely *berndī*  
with its diamonds sparkling

like Mercury  
in the lap  
of his doting father  
the Full Moon!\*

191. *jau laurṁ lakhaurṁ na kula kathā, tau laurṁ ṭhika ṭhaharāi |*  
*dekhairṁ āvat dekhihūrṁ, kyaurṁhūrṁ rahyau na jāi ||*

Her reply to her companion

Your counsel  
about keeping the family honour  
makes sense  
while I do not see him.  
But the moment  
he comes within sight  
I can only stare and stare,  
and all circumspection  
is thrown to the winds.



## LOVE-MAKING

192. *lāj garab ālas umarṅ, bhare nain musukāt |*  
*rāti ramī rati det kahi, aurai prabhā prabhāt ||*

What her companion said to her

Your eyes  
bashful and languid  
twinkling merrily  
with yearning and elation,  
have a different gleam  
this morning;  
they clearly reveal  
you have been making love  
all night.\*

193. *patī rati kī batiyaṁ kahīṁ, sakhi lagī musakāi |*  
*kai kai sabai ṭalāṭali, alīṁ calīṁ sukh pāi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

When her husband's talk  
turned amorous  
she smiled suggestively  
at her companions;  
upon which  
on one pretext or the other  
they cheerfully departed.\*

194. *camak tamak hāṁsi sasak, masak jhapāṭa lapaṭāni |*  
*ye jinhī rati so rati mukutī, aur mukutī ati hāni ||*

What he told her

Startled delights,  
rapturous throbs,  
passionate hugs,  
moans, laughter,  
rubs and squeezes—  
such love-making  
is liberation for me,  
I care for  
no other.

195. *kuñj-bhavana taji bhavana kaurī, calīye nāṇḍakisora |*  
*phūlati kalī gulāba kī, caṭakāhaṭ cahurī or ||*

What her companion told Kṛṣṇa, who was making love

Kṛṣṇa,  
see it's morning and  
all around the rosebuds  
open up with a crackle.  
Leave the arbour now and  
hasten home,  
or what will people say?

196. *sudutī durāye duratī nahīm, pragaṭ karatī ratī rūpa |*  
*chutairī plk aurai uthī, lālī oṭha anūpa ||*

What her companion said

However much you try, friend,  
you cannot hide  
the crimson-kissed bruises  
upon your lips.  
The red betel-juice on them  
has faded away now

and their crushed rubefacience  
shines out  
all the more.\*

197. *heri hirṇḍoraim gagan taim, pari pari-si tūṭi |*  
*dhari dhāi piya bīc hīṇ, karī kharī rasa lūṭi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Seeing her lover come  
she suddenly jumped off the swing  
looking like  
a heavenly nymph  
falling from the sky.  
He caught her in mid-air  
and strained her to his bosom  
stealing the fruits of love  
before he released her.\*

198. *paryau joru biparīt rati, rupī surati-ran dhīra |*  
*karati kulāhala kinkini, gahyau mauna mañjira ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Friend, she's on top  
I reckon,  
resolute in love's combat,  
for the bells of her girdle  
jingle away,  
while those of her anklets  
are now mute.\*

199. *binatī rati biparīt kī, karī parasi piya pāi |*  
*harṇsi anabolaim hīṇ diyau, ūtaru diyau batāi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

When he clasped her feet  
begging her to play the lover,

she laughed  
and put out the oil lamp,  
wordlessly  
signifying consent.\*

200. *mere bījhat bāt tū, kat baharāvati bāla |*  
*jaga jānī biparīt rati, lakhi bindulī piya bhāla ||*

What her companion said

Why do you hedge, dear girl,  
on my asking you,  
when everyone can guess  
by the round mark on your lover's brow  
that you've exchanged clothes with him  
and played the man.\*

201. *rādhā hari hari rādhikā, banī āye saṅketa |*  
*dampatī rati biparīt sukha, sahaja suratahūm leta ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Exchanging clothes  
Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa  
came to the rendezvous  
for love-making.  
She was on top  
but dressed as a man,  
so they got the thrill  
of novelty  
even while seeming  
to make love  
in the normal way!

202. *raṅgī surat raṅg piya hiyaiṁ, lagī jagī saba rāti |*  
*pairāt pairāt par thaṭhaki kai, airt bhari airtāti ||*

What one of her companions said to another

She has woken all night  
twined to her lover  
and now, steeped in the rapture  
of her love-making,  
she walks about  
swaying with pride,  
stopping at each step.\*

203. *paṭ ki dhig kat dhāṁpiyati, sobhit subhag subesa |*  
*hada radachada chabi det iha, sada rada-chada ki rekh ||*

What her companion said to her

The exquisite love-bites  
newly made on your lips  
by your sweetheart  
look fascinating, dear girl,  
why hide them  
with your sari end?\*

204. *raman kahyo haṭhi raman kauri, rati biparīt bilāsa |*  
*citaī kari locana satar, salaj saros sahāsa ||*

What one of her companions said to another

His insistence  
in asking her to play the lover  
piqued her,  
but with a bashful arch glance  
she smiled her agreement.

205. *jadapi nāhīm nāhīm nahīm, badan lagi jaka jāti |*  
*tadapi bhaumha hāmsi bharinu, hām siyai thaharāti ||*

What her messenger said to him

What if she keeps saying  
'no! no!' dear lad.  
Don't you see  
her smiling eyebrows  
signify 'yes'?

206. *jyaurn jyaurn pāvak lapaṭ si, tiya hiya saurn lapaṭāti |*  
*tyaurn tyaurṇ chuhi gulāba sai, chatiyā ati siyarāti ||*

What he said

The more  
that girl  
like a flame of fire  
twines around me,  
the cooler my bosom feels,  
as though sprinkled  
with rosewater!

207. *saras kusum maṇḍarāt ali, na jhuki jhapaṭi lapaṭāi |*  
*darasat ati sukumāru tana, parasat mana na patyāi ||*

What her companion said

She's tender, lad,  
make love to her gently:  
the black bee only hovers  
over a lovely flower,  
he does not pounce  
and roughly clasp it  
fearing it's too delicate  
to stand his weight.

208. *dhithyau dai bolati harṁsati, praurha-bilāsa apaurha |*  
*tyaurṁ tyaurṁ calat na piya nayan, chakaye chakī navoṛh ||*

What one of her companions said to another

As the intoxication  
of the newly-wed  
who had been plied with wine  
mounted,  
and she brazenly laughed and spoke to him  
like a wanton  
arousing him to make love;  
she held him so spellbound  
with her enchantment  
that he just gazed and gazed.\*

209. *dīpa ujerehū patihim, harat basan rati-kāj |*  
*rahi lapaṭi chabi kī chaṭani, naikau chuṭī na lāj ||*

What one of her companions said to another

When he undressed her  
in the lamp's light  
to make love,  
he was so dazzled  
by her body's splendour  
that his eyes could not see  
her nakedness,  
and her shame was preserved!

210. *lakhi daurat piya-kara-kaṭak, bāsa churāvana kāj |*  
*barunī ban gārhai dṛgana, rahi guṭhau kari lāj ||*

What one of her companions said to another

When his eager hands  
advanced  
to unclothe her  
as an army bent

on conquest,  
bashfulness hid  
in the fortress of her eyes  
fringed by the forest  
of her eyelashes.\*

211. *sakuci surati ārambha hīn, bichuri lāj lajāi |*  
*ḍharaki ḍhāri ḍhuri ḍhig bhaI, ḍhīṭha ḍhiṭhāi āi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

As soon as he began  
to make love,  
all bashfulness fled:  
and thrilling  
with ecstasy  
that audacious wanton  
flew to his arms.

212. *sakuci saraki piya nikaṭ tairn, mulaki kachuk tana tori |*  
*kara āncara kI oṭ kari, jamuhānI murṇha mori ||*

What her companion said about her

Longing to make love  
she arose  
and, provocatively smiling,  
stretched her limbs;  
then as if abashed  
she raised her sari end  
and turning her face aside  
sleepily yawned.

213. *nahirn hari laurn hiyarā dharau, nahirn hari laurn aradhaṅga |*  
*ekat hī kari rakhiyai, aṅga aṅga prati aṅga ||*

What her messenger said to him

Enshrining her in your heart



as Lakṣmī is in Viṣṇu's  
will not appease her, dear lad,  
nor an embrace  
like Śiva's of Pārvatī:  
the only way to gratify  
this wanton  
is to fold her tight  
limb to limb!\*

214. *sukh saum bitī saba nisā, janu soye ik sāth |*  
*mūkā meli gahe su chin, hāth na chore hāth ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Clasping each other's hand  
through the hole  
in the partition wall  
between their houses  
they spent the night in bliss  
as though they had slept together!\*

215. *dhyāna āni dhig prānapati, raḥati mudit dina rāti |*  
*palak kaṁpati pulakati palak, palak pasijati jāti ||*

What one of her companions told another

Making believe  
her lover was with her  
she savoured the bliss of union  
all night and day:  
tremulously quivering  
deliriously thrilling  
and bathed in sweat.

216. *ham̐si oṭhan bic kara ucai, kiyaim̐ nicauhaim̐ nain |*  
*khare are piya ke priyā, birī lagī mukh dain ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Her lover  
obstinately refused  
again and again  
the betels she offered him,  
yet she raised her hand  
and, with downcast eyes,  
smilingly put them in his mouth.\*

217. *lakhi lakhi am̐khiyana adhakhulina, āṁga mori am̐grāi |*  
*ādhik uṭhi leṭati laṭaki, ālas bhari jamhāi ||*

What her companion said about her state after love-making

Looking all round  
with tired half-open eyes  
and languorously stretching and  
twisting her limbs,  
she raises herself a little,  
but again lazily yawning  
falls back on the bed.

218. *nāka mori nāhīm̐ kahai, nāri nihoraim̐ lei |*  
*chuvat oṭha biya āṁgurina, birī badan pyau dei ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Protesting indignantly  
she said 'no! no!'  
beseeching him  
not to press betels on her;  
but, brushing her lips  
with eager fingers,  
he placed them  
in her mouth.\*

219. *mair̥m misahā soyau samujhi, mur̥nha cūmyau dhig āi |*  
*har̥nsyau khisānī gala gahyau, rahī garair̥m lapaṭai ||*

What she told her confidante

I was abashed  
to see my wily lover,  
whom I thought asleep,  
smile  
when I stooped  
and kissed him.  
Nothing daunted  
he twined his arms round me,  
so weakening my resolve  
that I gave up all pretence  
and clung fast to his neck.

220. *nīṭhi nīṭhi uṭhi baiṭhihūm, pyau pyāri parabhāt |*  
*doū nīmd bharair̥m khāraim, garai lāgi giri jāt ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Exhausted  
after nightlong love-making  
the lovers  
sat up somehow,  
but nodding sleepily  
clung to each other,  
and fell back listlessly again  
upon the bed.

221. *tanak jhuṭ na savādili, kaun bāt pari jāi |*  
*tiya-mukh ratī-ārambha kī, nahim̥ jhūṭiyai mīṭhāi ||*

What he told his confidant

Even a little untruth  
is bitter,  
but a woman's 'no!'

at the start of love-making,  
though false  
is sweet!\*

222. *yaum dalamiyat niradaī, daī kusum se gāt |*  
*kara dhari dekhau dharadharā, ajauri na ur te jāt ||*

What one of her companions said to  
another in her presence

O god!  
How cruelly  
he has crushed this girl  
of flower-like tenderness,  
just place your hand  
on her bosom  
and see,  
her heart is even now  
palpitating!

223. *lahi rati sukh lagiyai hiyaim, lakhī lajaumhīrī nīthi |*  
*khulati na mo mana bāndhi rahi, vahai adhakhuli dīthi ||*

What he told her confidante  
The shy glance  
she threw  
from half-opened eyes  
as she lay against my bosom  
satiated with the rapture  
of love-making,  
is forever etched  
in my memory.

224. *chinaka ughāṛati chin chavati, rākhati chinaka chipāi |*  
*sab dina piya-khaṇḍita adhar, darapan dekhati jāi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

The whole day  
she's at the mirror  
looking at the bruise  
left on her lips  
in love-making;  
exposing it,  
staring at it fondly  
and then covering it again.\*

225. *bhaumhani trāsati mumiha naṭati, āmkin saum lapaṭati |*  
*aimci chutāvati kara imci, āgaim āvati jāti ||*

What one of her companions said to another

She turned to him  
an angry brow  
saying 'no!'  
but her ardent gaze  
clung to him.  
She pretended  
to wrench her hand away  
from his hold  
but kept pulling him  
closer!

## ANOTHER WOMAN

226. *kharī pātari kāna kī, kaun bahāū bāni |*  
*āk-kalī na rālī karai, alī alī jiya jāni ||*

What her companion said

Foolish girl,  
why are you duped  
by what people say?  
Does the black bee  
ever suck pollen  
from a *madāra* bud?\*

227. *palana pīk añjana adhara, dhare mahāvara bhāl |*  
*āj mile su bhālī karī, bhale bane hau lāl ||*

What she said

Well have you done, indeed!  
In meeting me today  
with eyebrows reddened with betel-juice  
lips stained with lamp-black  
and your forehead streaked with lacquer dye.  
Lover,  
what a sight you look!\*

228. *vāhī kī cit caṭapaṭī, dharat aṭapaṭe pāi |*  
*lapaṭ bujhāvat birah kī, kapaṭ bharehū āi ||*

What she said

Your unsteady gait shows  
your thoughts are still with that girl  
you've made love to all night.

Despite your duplicity, lover,  
your coming  
puts out the flames  
of my separation.

229. *gahaki gāmsu aurai gahe, rahe adhakahe bain |*  
*dekhi khisaumhaim piya-nayan, kiye risaumhaim nain ||*

What one of her companions said to another

She clasped him warmly  
whispering endearments,  
but seeing his abashed eyes  
she guessed he had been making love  
to another girl,  
and the words froze on her lips  
as she cast on him  
a withering glance.

230. *pāvak so nayanana lagai, jāvak lāgyau bhāl |*  
*mukura hohuge naimku maim, mukura bilokahum lāl ||*

What she said

Your lacquer stained forehead  
inflames my eyes.  
Here's a mirror,  
now see the proof  
of your guilt, lad;  
once it's washed away  
you'll never own up!\*

231. *tarivana kanaka kapol-duti, bic bic him bikāni |*  
*lāl lāl camakata cunim, caukā cinha samāni ||*

What she said to her messenger

The golden glow  
of your ear ornament

is lost in your cheek's lustre;  
but their gem's red gleam  
vies with the love-bites on them  
made by his teeth!\*

232. *mohi dayau merau bhayo, rahat ju mili jiya sāth |*  
*so mana bāmdhi na saumpiyai, piya sautihi kaim hāth ||*

What she said to her husband

When you gave me your heart  
dear love,  
it became one  
with mine.  
Now if you wrest it  
from me  
to give it  
to my co-wives,  
it will carry away  
mine too, and  
how will I survive?\*

233. *veI gati gāraim parim, upaṭyau hāra hiyaim na |*  
*ānyau mori mataṅga mana, māri gurerana maina ||*

What she said

These marks  
have not been made  
on your bosom  
by that woman's necklace;  
lover, it seems to me  
Kāma  
has pelted your elephant-like  
wayward heart,  
with stones from a catapult,  
to drive you back here!\*



234. *nair̥ṅku har̥ṣaur̥ṅh̥ṛṁ bāni taji, lakhyau parat mur̥ṅha nīṭhi |*  
*caukā camakani caur̥ṁdha maim, parit caur̥ṁdhi sī dīṭhi ||*

What her companion said to her

Leave off laughing  
a moment, friend,  
the glimmer  
of your front teeth  
so dazzles his eyes  
that he can hardly  
look you  
in the face!\*

235. *teha tararau tyauru kari, kat kariyat dṛga lol |*  
*lik nah̥ṛṁ yaha pīk kī, śruti-mani-jhalak kapol ||*

What her companion said to her

Why do you frown on him, friend?  
That is not  
a streak of betel-juice  
on his cheek,  
it's just the glow  
cast by his ear ornament's ruby!\*

236. *nabha lālī cālī nisā, caṭakālī dhuni kīna |*  
*rati pālī ālī anat, āye banamālī na ||*

What she said to her companion

The eastern sky  
glows red  
slaying night's darkness:  
swarms of sparrows  
twitter:  
yet Kṛṣṇa does not come.  
I fear he's lying, friend,

in the arms of some woman  
somewhere.

237. *biya sautina dekhat daī, apane hiya ki lāl |*  
*phirati dāhaḍaī sabana mern, uhairn maragajī māla ||*

What her companion said to him

Remember, dear lad,  
the garland  
you took off your bosom  
and gave her  
in the presence of your co-wives?  
Even though its flowers  
have faded,  
she goes about  
happily sporting it  
to taunt them!

238. *āye āpu bhālī karī, meṭan mān maror |*  
*dūri karau yaha dekhihai, chalā chiguniyā-chor ||*

What her companion said to him

It's good you've come  
to soothe away her haughty sulkiness,  
but pray remove  
that telltale ring  
from your little finger  
before she spots it.

239. *chirake nāha naboṛh dṛga, kara-picakī jala jora |*  
*rocana raṁga lālī bhaī, biya-tiya locana-kora ||*

What one of her companions said to another

With her co-wives looking on  
he cupped his hands  
and playfully squeezed

a stream of water  
into the eyes  
of his newly-wed wife:  
and wonderfully  
all their eyes became red;  
hers from soreness,  
theirs from jealousy!\*

240. *bāla kahā lālī bhai, loin koin mārha |*  
*lāl tihāre dṛgana ki, parī dṛgana mairī chārha ||*

His question and her reply

‘Why are the corners  
of your eyes red, dear?’  
he asked his girl  
whose eyes had reddened with rage  
on seeing him come crimson-eyed  
from nightlong love-making  
with another woman.  
She pertly replied,  
‘Lover, they’re only reflecting  
the redness of *your* eyes!’\*

241. *tarun kokanad baran bara, bhaye aruna nisi jāgi |*  
*vāhī kairī anurāga dṛga, rahai manau anurāgi ||*

What she said to him

Your eyes turned crimson  
from nightlong waking  
look like a full-blown  
red lotus;  
it seems they’ve been dyed  
with the love of that woman  
with whom you’ve dallied.

242. *lālan lahi pāi durai, corī saumha karaiṁ na |*  
*sIsa cathe panihā pragaṭa, kahaiṁ pukāraiṁ nain ||*

What she said to him

Dear lad,  
one may swear and swear  
he's not a thief,  
but when he is exposed  
how can he deny it?  
Your reddened eyes  
cry out brazenly  
that you have spent the night  
in secret love-making.

243. *turat surat kaisaiṁ durat, murat nain juri nīṭhi |*  
*ḍaurṁtī dai guna rāvare, kahati kanaurī ḍīṭhi ||*

What she said to him

How can you hide  
you've come here directly  
after making love  
to another woman?  
Your sheepish eyes  
fight shy of mine  
and even if they meet  
you look guiltily away  
the next moment.  
Your shame-faced glance  
proclaims aloud  
your wrongdoing.

244. *marakat-bhājana-salil-gat, iṇḍukalā kaiṁ bekh |*  
*jhīna jhagā mairiṁ jhalamalai, syāmagāt nakh-rekh ||*

What she said to her faithless lover

The nail mark

on your dark body  
made by the woman  
you've made love to,  
shines out from within  
your flimsy garment  
as the new moon reflected  
in a sapphire bowl  
full of water.\*

245. *bālama bāraim sauti kairi, suni paranāri-bihāra |  
bho rasa anarasa risa rali, riḷha khijha ik bāra ||*

What one of her companions said to another

When she learnt  
he had made love  
to another woman  
giving a miss  
to her co-wife,  
she was, in the same breath,  
glad and downcast,  
angry and amused,  
pleased and vexed!\*

246. *kesara kesari-kusuma ke, rahe aṅga lapaṭāi |  
lage jāni nakh anakhuli, kat bolat anakhāi ||*

What her companion said

Why do you chide him  
needlessly, dear girl?  
These marks you see  
are not nail scratches  
made by his mistress,  
but filaments of saffron flowers  
that have got stuck  
on his body.

247. *rahi pakari pāṭi su risa, bhare bhaurnha cit nain |*  
*lakhi sapanai piya āna rata, jagatahu lagat hiyai na ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Asleep  
pressed to her lover's bosom  
she dreamt  
he was making love  
to another woman.  
Waking  
she fumed, and  
turned her back to him!

248. *nakh-rekhā sohaiṁ naī, alasoṁhaiṁ saba gāt |*  
*saurnhaiṁ hota na nain ye, tuma saurnhaiṁ kat khāt ||*

What she said to him

You're looking spent,  
the scratches made by her  
on your body  
are still fresh  
and your guilty eyes  
can't meet mine.  
Why then  
do you keep vainly swearing  
your innocence  
lover?

249. *tu mati mānai mukutai, kiyai kapaṭ cit koṭi |*  
*jau gunahi tau rākhiai, āmkhina māmjhā agoṭi ||*

Her accusation

You've been making love to  
another woman  
lover,  
how can your vain excuses

ever hide  
your guilt?

His answer

Even though you doubt me  
sweetheart,  
give me your love still;  
keep my remembrance imprisoned  
forever in your eyes.\*

250. *dacchina piya hvai bāma basa, bisarāi tiya āna |*  
*ekai bāsari kairi biraha, lāge baras bihāna ||*

His co-wives, complaint

Neglecting us all  
our adulterous husband  
unmindful of his vow  
remains always  
with that villainous  
neighbour woman.  
Though only a wall  
separates him from us  
we haven't seen him  
for a whole year now!\*

251. *sohat saṅg samān saurī, yai kahai saba loga |*  
*pānī pik oṭhan banai, kājar nainana joga ||*

What she said to him

Like things  
go with each other  
as all men know:  
red betel-juice  
makes lips look lovelier,  
lamp-black  
gives charm to eyes.

But how come, lover,  
your *brows* are betel-juice stained and  
the lamp-black is on your *lips*!\*

252. *mair̥ tapāi traya tāpa saur̥, rākhyau hiyo hamām |*  
*matī kabahuk āyer̥ ihām, pulak pasīje syāma ||*

What she said to him

You've returned from your mistress  
all spent up and perspiring,  
come lover,  
I'll chase away your tiredness  
in the *hammām* of my heart  
which I ever keep warmed up  
with the triple heat  
of passion, ardour and craving.\*

253. *anat base nisi kī risani, ur bari rahī biseṣi |*  
*taū lāj āi jhukat, khare lajauhair̥ dekhi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Though she inwardly fumed  
when her lover returned  
from his nightlong  
secret love-making,  
seeing him penitently remorseful  
her heart softened  
and she refrained from  
chiding him.

254. *surar̥ṅ mahāvara sauti paga, nirakhi rahī anakhāi |*  
*piya ar̥ṅgurina lālī lakhe, khārī uṭhī lagī lāi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

She burned with jealousy  
seeing her co-wife's



elegant lacquer-stained feet,  
and when she saw  
the same dye  
on her husband's fingers too  
she knew 'twas he  
who had put it on and  
her fury knew no bounds.

255. *kat sakucat nidharaka phirau, ratiyau khori tumhairn na |*  
*kahā karau jau jārhhi ye, lagairn lagauhairn nain ||*

Her taunt to her faithless lover

Strange you feel abashed  
after all your affairs, lover!  
Need you fear reproach  
when,  
each time you're bewitched by a girl,  
you can throw the blame  
on your fickle eyes?

256. *nirakhi navauphā nāri tana, chuṭat larikal lesa |*  
*bhau pyārau pritam tiyan, manau calat paradesa ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Seeing the newly-wed wife  
from whom childhood had slipped away  
blossoming into a lovely girl,  
her co-wives knew  
she would get  
all their husband's attention.  
That made them warm up to him  
as though he was going  
on a long voyage!\*

257. *prānapriyā hiya mairṁ basai, nakh-rekhā-sasi bhāl |*  
*bhalau dikhāyaurṁ āi yaha, hari-hara-rūpa rasāl ||*

What she said to her faithless lover

Your mistress' memory  
is enshrined in your heart  
like Lakṣmi's in Viṣṇu's  
and her nail mark shines on your brow  
as the crescent moon  
on Śiva's forehead;  
how well of you lad  
to bless me with the sight  
of both the gods  
at the same time!\*

258. *tīja parab sautina saje, bhūṣan basan sarīra |*  
*sabai maragaje munha karī, ihī maragajai cīra ||*

What one of her companions said to another

On the *tīja* day  
her co-wives gaily adorned themselves  
with ornaments  
and gorgeous dresses,  
but when they saw her sari  
rumpled and soiled  
with nightlong love-making  
they burned with jealousy  
and their faces were crestfallen.\*

259. *munha miṭhāsa dṛga cikane, bhauhairṁ saral subhāi |*  
*taū kharairṁ ādar kharau, khina khina hiyairṁ sakāi ||*

What he said to her

Although you're speaking sweetly  
gazing lovingly  
and your eyebrows

are not knit with anger;  
your affected deference, dear girl,  
makes me more and more apprehensive  
each moment!

260. *hyāñ na calai bali raurī, caturāl ki cāl |*  
*sanakh hiyañ khina-khina naṭat, anakh bathāvat lāl ||*

What she said to her faithless lover

I admire your cleverness, dear lad,  
but it won't work with me.  
Your denial  
of having made love to another girl  
despite her nail scratches on your bosom  
only raises my ire  
still more.

261. *ur māñik ki urbaśī, ḍaṭat ghaṭat dṛga-dāga |*  
*chalaḱat bāhir bhari manau, tiya hiya kau anurāga ||*

What she said

The telltale ruby necklace  
on your bosom  
which you've forgotten to take off  
shows you've exchanged dresses  
with your mistress  
making her play the lover.  
Its flashing redness  
which inflames my eyes,  
is as though your deep love for her  
had spilled out  
from your heart.\*

262. *sughara sauti basa piya sunat, dulahini duguna hulāsa |*  
*lakhī sakhi tana dīthi kāri, sagaraba salaj sahāsa ||*

What one of her companions said to another

When that newly-wed girl  
learnt that her co-wife  
dominated her husband  
by her shrewdness,  
she was supremely happy  
for she knew she could be shrewder,  
and bashfully threw me, friend,  
a triumphant smile.

263. *ṭunahāi saba ṭol mair̃, rahī ju sauti kahāi |*  
*su tair̃ aim̃ci pyau āp tana, karī adhokhil āi ||*

What the newly-wed woman's companion said to her

When everyone saw him  
irresistibly drawn  
to that co-wife of his  
they dubbed her an enchantress;  
but ever since  
you've snatched him away from her  
she's rid of the infamy!

264. *vaisṭyai jānī paratī, jhagā ūjare māhir̃ |*  
*mrganainī lapaṭī ju yaha, benī upaṭī bāhir̃ ||*

What she said

All your pretences  
are vain, dear lad;  
the braid marks  
of the girl  
you had pressed to your bosom  
show unmistakably

on the sleeve  
of your white dress.

265. *chalā parosini hāth taim, chala kari liyau pichāni |  
piyahīn dikhāyau lakhi bilakhi, risa sūcaka musakāni ||*

What one of her companions said to another

She was grieved to see  
her lover's ring  
on her woman-neighbour's finger.  
Taking it from her  
on some pretext  
she showed it to him,  
veiling her wrath  
with a knowing smile.

266. *haṭhi hita kari pritam liyau, kiyau ju sauti singāru |  
apanāin kara motin guhyau, bhayo harā hara-hāru ||*

What one of her companions said to another

She herself stringed  
a garland of pearls  
for her husband to wear.  
When her co-wife,  
who had cajoled it out of him,  
came adorned  
with that same garland,  
it seemed to her as fearful  
as the serpent  
round Śiva's neck!\*

267. *ḍiṭhi parosini iṭhi hvai, kahe ju gahe sayāna ||  
sabai sarṇdese kahi kahyau, musukahaṭ meri māna ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Pretending to be her friend

her audacious woman-neighbour  
who was her husband's sweetheart  
gave her some messages for him.  
Though she conveyed them  
she made it known by her smiles  
she had got wise  
to their romance.

268. *lalan salone aru rahe, ati saneha sorn pāgi |*  
*tanak kacāi det dukh, sūran laurn munha lāgi ||*

What she said to her faithless lover

You're handsome, dear lad,  
and loving too;  
but your deceitful lies  
are like the acrid taste  
of *sūran* left uncooked.\*

269. *na karu na daru sab jaga kahat, kat bina kāj lajāt |*  
*saurnhairn kije nain jau, sārnci saurnhairn khāt ||*

Everyone knows  
he has nothing to fear  
if he has done no wrong.  
If you insist, dear lad,  
you've not been making love  
to another woman  
why can't you look me  
in the eye?

270. *rahyau cakit cahumdhā citai, cit merau mati bhūli |*  
*sūra udairn āye rahī, dṛgana sārñjha sī phūli ||*

What she said to her faithless lover

I'm perplexed and amazed  
to see you come at sunrise

after your night of love-making  
with the sunset's glow  
reflected  
in your sleep-starved eyes!

271. *kat bekāj calāiyat, catural kī cāla |*  
*kahe deti yaha rāvare, sab guna niraguna māla ||*

What she said to him

Your deceit  
will not work with me  
crafty lover,  
the telltale curve  
of bead marks  
upon your bosom  
eloquently betray  
your clandestine love-making.\*

272. *bāṛhat to ur uraj bharu, bhar tarunaī bikās |*  
*bojhan sautina kair̥n hiyair̥n, āvat rūṛndhī usās ||*

What her friend said to her

Your breasts turn heavy  
as your girlhood slips away,  
but it seems they're burdening  
the hearts of your jealous co-wives  
so that their grieved breath  
comes in short gasps!

273. *naye birah bāṛhati bithā, kharī bikal jiya bāla |*  
*bilakhī dekhi parosinyau, haraṣī harṁsī tihir̥n kāla ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Parted from her lover  
for the first time  
that young girl

was lamenting his absence,  
when she saw  
her woman-neighbour's tormented face;  
and guessing  
the secret affair between them  
she heartily laughed.\*

274. *phūlphali phūla-sī, phirati ju bimal bikās |*  
*bhor taraiyām hohute, calat tohīm piya pās ||*

What her companion said

Your co-wives  
are swaggering about joyfully  
their faces-bright  
as blossoming flowers,  
but the moment they see you go  
to meet your lover  
they'll turn pale  
like stars fading  
in the morning light.

275. *deha lagyau dhig gehapati, taū neha nirabāhi |*  
*dhili amkhiyan hī itai, gāl kanakhiyan cāhi ||*

What he said to his friend

Even though all the three of us—  
she, her husband and I—  
were sitting so close together  
that our bodies almost touched;  
she managed to slant her eyes  
and ogle at me!



276. *duraim na nigharaghaṭyaum diyaīm, ye rāvarī kucāl |*  
*biṣu-sī lāgati hai burī, haṁsī khisī kī lāl ||*

What she said to her faithless lover

However much you try,  
your shameless excuses  
can't hide your wrongdoing;  
your dissembling smiles, dear lad,  
are like poison to me.

277. *pala sohaīm pagi pīk raṁg, chal sohaīm saba bain |*  
*bala sauhaīm kat kījyat, ye alasaumhaīm nain ||*

What she said to him

Your eyebrows  
kissed by her  
are still stained  
by red betel-juice,  
all your words  
smack of deceit.  
Faithless lover,  
why do you on purpose  
turn your sleepy eyes  
towards me?

278. *kat lapataiyata mo garaim, so na ju hī nisi sain |*  
*jihīm campakabarani kiye, gullālā raṁg nain ||*

What she said to her faithless lover

Why are you clinging  
to my neck, lover?  
I'm not  
that *campaka*-complexioned beauty  
you've gone to bed with,  
who has kept you awake  
all night

so that your eyes are red  
as the *gullālā* flower.\*

279. *bithuryau jābaka sauti paga, nirakhi haṁsī gahi gāṁs* |  
*salaj haṁsaumhīm lakhi liyo, ādhī haṁsī usāṁs* ||

What one of her companions said to another

She chuckled to see  
the clumsily applied  
lacquerdye  
on her co-wife's feet.  
But when her co-wife  
bashfully smiled  
she knew 'twas her husband  
who had put it on  
with hands trembling with ardour,  
and her smirk  
turned into a sigh of grief!

280. *sahī raṅgīlaim rati jagaim, jagī pagī sukh cain* |  
*alasaumhaim saumhaim kiyaim, kahaim haṁsaumhaim nain* ||

What her confidante said to her

The merry twinkle  
in your tired sleepy eyes  
unmistakably testifies  
to your having been awake  
blissfully love-making;  
not, as you would have us believe,  
watching a show.

281. *kat kahiyaṭ dukh dena kauri, raci raci bacan alik* |  
*sabai kahāu rahyau lakhaim, lāl mahāvara-lik* ||

What she said to her faithless lover

Why do you vex me

dear lād  
by your trumped up excuses?  
The telltale streak  
of lacquer dye  
on your forehead  
is a dead giveaway.

282. *phirat ju aṭakat kaṭani bina, rasika surasa na khiyāl |  
anat anat nita-nita hitan, kat sakucāvat lāl ||*

What she said to him

You keep getting infatuated  
with new girls each day  
without being true to them  
so that love  
has become for you  
a kind of sport.  
Faithless lover,  
your fickleness  
puts Love to shame.\*

283. *sadan sadan ke phiran kī, sada na chutai harirāi |  
ruci titai biharat phirau, kat biharat it āi ||*

What she said to him

Gallivanting lover,  
it seems you won't cease  
roaming from house to house  
to dally with your mistresses.  
Well, go  
where it pleases you;  
but don't ever come here  
to break *my* heart.

284. *subharu bharyau tuva guna-kanani, pakayau kapaṭ kuṭāl |*  
*kyauṁ dhaum dāryau jyauṁ hiyau, darakat nāhīm na lāl ||*

What she said to her faithless lover

My heart is burdened  
by your faults  
as a pomegranate shell  
by its seeds;  
and as, turning juicy  
they fill the fruit all the more,  
till over-ripening  
it cracks open;  
your misdemeanours, dear lad,  
have brought my heart  
to the bursting point,  
and it's a wonder  
it does not burst!\*

285. *calat det ābhāru suni, uhlīm parosini nāha |*  
*lasī tamāse kī dṛgana, hāhṁsi āṁsuna māmha ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Her eyes were brimming with tears  
when the moment came  
for her husband's departure,  
but when he entrusted the house  
to his neighbour  
who was her secret lover,  
she flashed a sudden smile.

286. *paṭ saum porṁchi paṭi karau, kharī bhayānak bhekh |*  
*nāgini hvai lāgati dṛgana, nāgabeli raṁg rekh ||*

What the angry girl said

The red streak  
of betel-juice

left on your eyebrow  
by her kiss  
seems like a fearful serpent to me;  
wipe it away  
with the hem of your dress  
and remove my torment.

287. *jo tiya tuvā manabhāvati, rākhī hiyaiṁ basāi |*  
*mohiṁ jhukāvati dṛgani hvai, vahaī ujhakati āi ||*

What she said to him

The girl  
whose name you've just uttered  
and who's treasured in your heart  
is your true beloved;  
no wonder her image  
is always before your eyes  
so that you keep  
mistaking me for her  
and calling me by her name.

288. *vāhī dina taim na miṭyau, māna kalah kau mūla |*  
*bhale padhāre pāhune, hvai guṭhar kau phūla ||*

What her companion said to him

Discord is now  
like a guest come to stay  
ever since  
the day you came home  
like a *guṭhal* flower  
after spending the night  
with your mistress,  
telltale love marks  
all over you.\*

289. *mauhūr̥ saur̥ bātan lagair̥, lagī jībhi jīhīr̥ nāi |*  
*soī lai ur lāiyai, lāl lāgiyat pāi ||*

What she said to him

Release me from your arms  
I beg of you, dear lad,  
and embrace that woman instead  
whose name keeps lingering  
on your lips!

290. *mohir̥ karat kat bāurī, karair̥ durāu durair̥ na |*  
*kahe det raṁg rāti ke, raṁg-nicurat-se nain ||*

What she said to her faithless lover

Why are you trying to fool me  
by your lies?  
Despite all your endeavours  
the truth can't be hid.  
Your crimson eyes  
proclaim aloud  
your nightlong love-making.

291. *bilakhī lakhai khari khari, bhari anakh bairāga |*  
*mṛganainī saina na bhajai, lakhi benī ke dāga ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Overwhelmed with rage and anguish  
that antelope-eyed girl  
stood staring  
at the impress  
of another woman's braid  
upon the bedsheet,  
and turning her heart away from him  
she would not get on the bed.\*

292. *gahyau abolau boli pyau, āpahim paṭhai basīṭhi |*  
*diṭhi curāi duhun kī, lakhi sakucaumhīm diṭhi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

When the woman  
she herself had sent  
to fetch her lover  
returned with him,  
she guessed  
by their abashed glances  
that the two  
had been making love  
on the sly;  
and turning away from him  
she kept sullenly silent.

293. *dusaha sauti sālaim su hiya, ganati na nāha-biyāha |*  
*dhare rūpa guna kau garab, phirai acheha uchāha ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Though knowing  
what unbearable anguish  
a co-wife can cause,  
she's not bothered,  
but goes about self-assured  
proudly flaunting her beauty.

294. *aur sabai haraṣī haṁsatim, gāvatim bharī uchāha |*  
*tuṁhī bahū bilakhī phirai, kyaum devar kaim byāha ||*

What an elderly woman neighbour said to her

Young woman,  
why do you alone  
wander about lamenting  
when all others  
are lustily singing

and gleefully making merry  
in your brother-in-law's  
wedding celebrations?  
Is it because  
you yourself are in love with him?

295. *nañi na śiśa sābit bhaī, luñi sukhan ki moñ |*  
*cup rahi ye cāri karat, sārī parī saloñ ||*

What she said to her woman messenger

It's no use your denying it  
for it's evident  
you've stolen my pleasures  
by making love to him  
yourself.  
Even though you don't own up  
the creases in your sari  
are enough  
to prove your guilt.

296. *jihīm bhāmini bhūsana racyau, caran mahāvara bhāl |*  
*tihīm manau ankhīyām rañgīm, oñhan kaim rañg lāl ||*

What she said to her faithless lover

The same woman  
who has adorned your forehead  
with the lacquer dye of her feet  
has also lent your eyes  
dear lad,  
the colour of her lips!\*

297. *tūñ mohan mana gañi rahī, gāñhī gañani guvālī |*  
*uñhai sadā nañasāla laurñ, saurñtini kaim ur sālī ||*

What the cowherd girl's companion told her

Dear girl,



you're firmly embedded  
in Kṛṣṇa's memory,  
but it constantly pains  
the hearts of your co-wives  
as a chipped arrowhead  
deep in the body.

298. *piya mana' ruci hvaibau kaṭhin, tana ruci hou simgāra |*  
*lākh karau āmkhi na bathairi, bathairi barhāyairi bāra ||*

What her companion said to her

Fear not, dear girl,  
it's hard for your co-wife  
to win his love  
by mere adornment,  
for how can she excel  
your natural beauty  
which alone can captivate him?  
Hair can be made  
to grow longer  
but eyes can't become  
any larger than they are!\*

299. *khalit bacan anakhulit dṛga, lalit sveda-kana-joti |*  
*aruna badan chabi madana ki, khari chabīli hoti ||*

What she said to her faithless lover

How charming you look, lover,  
indeed  
you're like Kāma himself!  
Your words faltering  
your slumberous eyes  
half-open,  
your face flushed crimson  
and your limbs

glistening exquisitely  
with beads of sweat.\*

300. *bahaki na ihm bahināpuli, jab tab bīr bināsa |*  
*bacai na batī sabīlahum, cila-ghom̄suvā mām̄sa ||*

The advice her wise companion gave her

Despite all your caution,  
your blind trust  
in your sisterly neighbour  
will, sooner or later,  
prove disastrous,  
for he'll surely succumb  
to her charms.

Can a piece of meat  
ever remain in a kite's nest  
without being devoured?

301. *ayau mīta bidesa tairī, kāhū kahyau pukāri |*  
*sunī hulasīm bīham̄si ham̄sī, doū duhuni nihāri ||*

What the girls' companion said

Hearing someone exclaim  
'Your lover has returned  
from abroad',  
both the girls  
who were in love with him  
beamed with joy;  
but instantly guessing  
each other's secret  
they exchanged  
a knowing smile!

302. *pāryau soru suhāga kau, in bin hīṁ piya neha |*  
*unadaumhīṁ ankhīyāṁ kakai, kai alasaumhīṁ deha ||*

What her companion told her

Your co-wives  
deliberately appear before you  
sleepy-eyed and tired,  
but I'm telling you, dear friend,  
it's all make-believe  
to put you off.  
It's only so that you may  
keep on taking airs  
and at length  
estrangle him from yourself.

303. *nhāi pahiri paṭu ḍaṭi kiyau, beṁḍi mīsi paranāma |*  
*dr̥ga calāi ghar kauṁ calī, bidā kiye ghanasyāma ||*

What one of her companions said to another

She bathed in the river  
and dressed up,  
then making as if  
to apply the *bindi* mark  
on her forehead  
folded her hands  
in a farewell greeting  
beseeching Kṛṣṇa with her eyes  
to go home  
for fear  
that if he stayed longer  
that fickle lover  
might fall for some other girl  
passing that way!\*

## THE WOMAN OFFENDED

304. *citavana rŭkhe dṛgani kI, hāṁsī bina musukāni |*  
*mānu janāyau mānini, jāni liyau piya jāni ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Her discerning lover  
could guess  
by her indifferent glances  
and her forced smiles  
that she was putting on airs.

305. *kaḥā lehuge khel meri, tajau aṭapaṭi bāt |*  
*naimku haṁsaumhāim hāim bhai, bhaurṁhāim saumhāim khāt ||*

What her companion said to him

What will you gain  
dear lad,  
by your foolish banter?  
After much coaxing  
she has unknit somewhat  
her brows,  
if you annoy her again  
she'll be hard to appease.\*

306. *sakuci na rahiyaī syāma suni, ye risaraumhāim bain |*  
*det racaurṁhāim cit kahe, neha nacaurṁhāim nain ||*

What her confidante said

Don't be put off  
Kṛṣṇa,  
by her angry words,

see now  
her ardent eyes  
are pouring out  
her heart's love.

307. *hama hāriṁ kai kai hahā, pāina pāryau pyauru ।  
lehu kahā ajahūṁ kiye, teha tarerau tyauru ॥*

What her companion said

We humbly entreated you  
to make up with your lover  
and even persuaded him  
to fall at your feet,  
yet you still  
knit your eyebrows  
and cast angry glances.  
What will you gain, friend,  
by this obduracy?\*

308. *satara bhauriṇha rūkhe bacana, karit kaṭhina mana nīṭhi ।  
kahā karaum hvai jāi hari, heri harisauriṇhūṁ dīṭhi ॥*

What she said to her companion

How many times  
have I resolved, friend,  
to harden my heart  
speak roughly  
and frown  
when I see Kṛṣṇa;  
but all my efforts  
are in vain;  
the moment he comes  
within my sight  
my eyes of themselves  
throw him a smile!

309. *sakat na tuva tâte bacana, mo rasa kau rasa khoi |  
khina khina aṭe khīr laurṇ, kharo subādilu hoi ||*

What he said to her

Your harsh  
anger-charged words  
cannot turn my love for you  
insipid.  
Instead,  
each moment they make it more delicious  
like milk  
boiling away!

310. *torasa rāṇcyau āna bas, kahau kuṭil mati kūra |  
jibha nibaurī kyaurṇ lagai, baurī cākhi aṇṅgūra ||*

What her companion said

Don't be taken in  
by the harsh words  
of thoughtless men.  
He loves you alone  
not another.  
Foolish girl,  
how can one who has tasted grape juice  
ever long for the bitter fruit  
of the *neem* tree?\*

311. *sovat lakhi mana mānu dhari, dhiga soyau pyau āi |  
rahī supana kī milani mili, piya hiya saurṇ lapaṭāi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Her lover came  
and quietly lay  
beside that sulking girl  
who was feigning sleep.  
No longer able

to restrain herself  
but keeping up the pretence,  
she turned  
as though sleepily,  
and twined her arms  
around him.

312. *rasa ki sī rukh sasimukhī, haṁsi haṁsi bolat bain |*  
*gūth mānu mana kyaurī rahai, bhaye būth-rang nain ||*

What her companion said to her

O moon-faced woman  
your smiles and endearments  
are all very well,  
but your angry eyes  
red as a ladybird  
are a giveaway.

313. *maim barajī kai bāra tūm, it kat leti karaṭ |*  
*pañkhurī gatai gulāba kī, parihaim gāt kharauṭ ||*

What her confidante said to her

How often have I told you, friend,  
not to turn your face away  
from your lover in bed  
lest the rose petals strewn  
near the pillow  
scratch your tender cheeks!

314. *mān karat barajati na haurī, ulaṭi divāvati saurīha |*  
*karī risaurīhūm jayigī, sahaj haṁsaurīhūm bhaurīha ||*

What her companion said

Far from stopping you  
I'll make you swear  
to be cross with him;

but say, dear girl,  
can those eyebrows of yours  
which are always smiling  
ever frown?

315. *ahe kahai na kahā kahyau, to soṁ naṇḍakisora |  
baraboli kat hot bali, bāre dṛgani ke jora ||*

What her companion said

Tell me, dear girl,  
what Kṛṣṇa has said  
to make you so angry?  
Don't revile him so  
I beseech you,  
for his rage  
can't last long.  
Your large bewitching eyes  
will soon  
bring him back.

316. *to hī ko chuṭ mān gau, dekhat hīm brajarāja |  
rahī gharik laum mān sī, mān kiyai kī lāja ||*

What her companion said to her

Just a glimpse of Kṛṣṇa  
has won you over;  
but still  
you're keeping up the pretence  
of being annoyed.  
I'm sure, dear girl,  
it's just to hide  
the embarrassment  
of your surrender!



317. *haṁsi haṁsāi ur lāi uṭhi, kahi na rukhaumhairi baina |*  
*jakita thakita hvai taki rahe, takati tiriche nain ||*

What her companion said to her

Your irate glance  
has awed and dazed him.  
Leave off your sulking  
and harsh words,  
chase away his gloom  
with smiles;  
arise dear friend  
and clasp him to your bosom.

318. *anarasahūṁ rasa pāiyatu, rasika rasili pās |*  
*jaisaim sāmṭhe kī kaṭhina, gāmṭhe bhari mīṭhās ||*

What her companion said to him

Go to her, dear lad,  
the harsh anger  
of that ravishing girl  
will be no hindrance  
to your pleasure:  
even the hard knots  
of sugarcane  
taste sweet!

319. *tapan-teja tapa-tāpi tapi, atula tulāi māmha |*  
*sisir sīta kyaumhum na mīṭai, bina lapaṭairi tiya nāmha ||*

What the sulking girl's companion told her

You can't beat  
winter's cold  
by the warmth of the sun  
or of the fire,  
or by covering yourself  
with a thick quilt.

The only way, dear girl,  
is to go and lie  
twined to your lover.

320. *kharair̥ṁ adab iṭhalāhaṭi, ur upajāvati trāsa |*  
*dusaha saṅk bisa kau karair̥ṁ, jaisair̥ṁ sor̥ṇṭhi miṭhāsa ||*

What he said to her

I know you're acting proud  
dear girl,  
your affected deference  
makes me highly suspicious,  
as one would be  
of sweet dry ginger  
which though tasting good  
is poisonous.\*

321. *nahir̥ṁ nacāi citavati dṛgana, nahir̥ṁ bolati musakāi |*  
*jyaur̥ṁ jyaur̥ṁ rūkhī rukh karati, tyaur̥ṁ tyaur̥ṁ cit cikanāi ||*

What he said to his sulking beloved

You neither throw  
a loving glance my way  
nor smile at me  
nor speak;  
yet the greater  
your indifference, dear,  
the tenderer  
is my heart  
for you.

322. *niradaya neha nayau nirakhi, bhayau jagat bhayabhīt |*  
*yaha na kahūr̥ṁ ab laur̥ṁ sunī, mari māriyai ju mīt ||*

What her companion said to her

Stubborn girl,

your love has just blossomed  
don't alarm us all  
by sulking;  
what will you profit  
by tormenting yourself  
and being a kill-joy  
to your loved one too?

323. *kudhaṅg kopa taji raṅgarali, karat jubati jaga joi |*  
*pāvasa gūṛh na bāt iha, būṛhanahūṛh raṅg hoi ||*

What her companion said to her

This is the rainy season  
when young girls  
no longer able to put on airs  
rush to their lovers' arms.  
Everyone knows  
that it makes even old women  
turn amorous  
like ladybirds  
taking on a reddish hue.  
So your sulking  
won't work now, dear girl,  
better hasten  
to your sweetheart.

324. *apanī garajani boliyat, kahā nihorau tohim |*  
*tū pyārau mo jiya kauri, mo jiya pyārau mohim ||*

What she said to him

I love you so dearly, lad,  
that your grief at my silence  
saddens me even more.  
So I'm making up  
for my own sake

to end my misery,  
'tis no obligation on you!

325. *kapaṭ satara bhaumhairṁ karīm, mukh manakhaurṁhairṁ bain |*  
*sahaj haṁsaumhairṁ jāni kari, saumhairṁ karati na nain ||*

What one of her companion said to another

Feigning anger  
she knitted her brows  
and spoke to him harshly,  
but fearing  
the twinkle in her eyes  
would be a giveaway,  
she kept looking down.

326. *rukḥ rūkḥī misa-roṣa mukh, kahati rukḥaurṁhairṁ bain |*  
*rukhe kaisairṁ hota ye, neha cikane nain ||*

What her companion said to her

Though you are pretending anger  
and speaking to him harshly,  
how can your eyes  
softened by love  
show unconcern?

327. *pati ritu avaguna guna bathat, mān māha kau sīta |*  
*jāt kaṭhin hvai ati mṛdau, ramanī mana navanīta ||*

What her companion told him

You have yourself to blame  
dear lad,  
for as soft butter  
hardens  
in the cold *Māgh* month  
a woman's tender mind

is turned harsh  
by her husband's vices.\*

328. *rāti divasa hausa rahai, mān na thiku thaharāya |*  
*jetaum auguna dhūmḍhiyai, gunhai hāth pari jāya ||*

What she said to her companion

Each moment  
I'meager  
to put on airs,  
but it's no use, friend,  
for the more faults  
I seek in him  
the more virtues  
I discover!

329. *disi disi kusumiti dekhiyat, upavana vipin samāja |*  
*manau biyogini kauri kiyau, sarapañjara riturāja ||*

What her companion said to her

Leave off sulking  
and hasten to your lover's arms  
dear girl,  
the forests and groves  
in bloom  
are like Spring's  
arrowhead-walled cages  
to torture women  
parted from their lovers!\*

330. *tiya tarasaumhaim mana kiye, kari sarasaum haim neha |*  
*dhar parasaumhaim hvai rahe, jhar barasaumhaim meha ||*

What her companion said to her sulking lover

How can you keep away from her  
dear lad,

when the rain-filled clouds  
eager to caress the earth  
pour all around  
making lovers' hearts  
overflow  
with longing?\*

331. *kiyau sabai jaga kāma-bas, jīte jīte ajeya |*  
*kusumasarahim sara-dhanuṣa kara, agahan gahan na deya ||*

What her companion said to her

You can't pretend indifference  
dear girl  
even if you want to,  
for in this cold *Agahan* month  
lovers rush to each others' arms  
of themselves.  
It unsettles the minds  
even of austere sages  
so that *Kāma*  
has no need to shoot  
his flower-tipped arrows!\*

332. *chaki rasāl saurabha sane, madhura mādhuri gaṇḍha |*  
*ṭhaur ṭhaur jhaurīrat jhaṇpat, bhaurīra-jhaur madhu aṇḍha ||*

What her companion said to her

It is spring, dear girl,  
when even swarms of black bees  
wander about  
drunk with the fragrance  
of mango blossoms  
and go surfeited  
with the sweet nectar  
of *mādhuri* creepers:

how can you keep away  
from your lover's arms?\*

333. *mili biharat bichurat marat, dampati ati rati lina |*  
*nūtan bidhi hemanta saba, jagat jurāfā kina ||*

What her companion said to her

Stop putting on airs  
dear girl,  
when couples  
lie cuddled together  
and lovers embrace.  
Don't you know  
in winter's new regime  
keeping away from your lover  
may prove as fatal  
as for a *jurāfā*  
separation from its mate?\*

334. *saurnhaimhum heryau na taim, keti dyāi saurnha |*  
*eho kyaum baiṭhi kiye, aimṭhi gvaimṭhi bhaurnha ||*

What her companion said

How many times  
we urged you  
to give up sulking  
but you never so much  
as glanced at him.  
Why do you sit now  
knitting your brows  
when he  
whom you wish to show your anger  
has gone?

335. *calau calaim chaṭi jāhigau, haṭh rāvaraim saṁkoca |*  
*khare cathāye he ti ab, āye locana loca ||*

What her messenger said to him

Now's the time, dear lad,  
to win over that indignant girl  
for her wrathful glances  
have softened somewhat,  
and your presence  
will no longer provoke her.

336. *mānu tamasau kari rahi, bibasa bāruni sei |*  
*jhukati haṁsati haṁsi haṁsi jhukati, jhuki jhuki haṁsi*  
*haṁsi dei ||*

What one of her companions said to another

She's so drunk  
that she is not in her senses  
and keeps scolding him  
and laughing  
by turns,  
so that even her sulking  
has become  
a mockery!

337. *tuhūṁ kahati haum āpu hūṁ, samajhati sabai sayānu |*  
*lakhi mohanu jau manu rahai, taurṁ mana rākhaurṁ mānu ||*

What she told her companion

Pretending unconcern  
might, as you say,  
thaw that charming lad,  
but when he steals away my heart  
the moment I see him,  
with what, friend,  
should I show indifference?



338. *Jōu adhiḱāi bhare, ekai gauriṁ gaharāi |*  
*kaun manāvai kau manai, māne sana ṭaharāi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

The lovers are sitting  
drowned in conceit:  
each thinks  
'let the other appease me first',  
and so they keep  
putting on airs,  
each trying to outdo the other!

339. *haṭh na haṭhili kari sakairiṁ, yaha pāvasa ṛta pāi |*  
*āni gāṁṭhi ghuṭi jāti jyaum, māna gāṁṭhi chuṭi jāi ||*

What her companion said to her

The rains are here  
filling all hearts with desire;  
it's no use sulking, dear girl,  
for even the most obdurate woman  
can't pretend indifference now.  
It's the season  
when hemp knots  
get tighter  
and those of standoffishness  
loosen.

340. *mohim lajāvat nilaj ye, hulasi milat saba gāt |*  
*bhānu udai ki os laurṁ, mān na jānati jāt ||*

What she said to her companion

Pining for his embrace  
my love-starved limbs  
put me to shame,  
for the moment he comes  
they make me cling to him

and my indifference flies away  
as dew-drops vanishing  
before the rising sun.

341. *rahairñ nigore nain gati, gahairñ na ceta aceta |*  
*haurñ kasa kai risa ke karaurn, ye nisuke hamsi deta ||*

What she said to her companion

My wretched eyes  
are so bewitched by him  
that they'll not be admonished.  
Although I counsel them  
to feign anger,  
the moment they see him  
they smile!

342. *eri yaha teri dai, kyaurnhũm prakṛti na jāi |*  
*neha bharairñ hiya rākhiyai, tau rūkhai lakḥāi ||*

What her companion said to her

Oh god,  
why do you keep pretending  
indifference?  
You're treasured  
in his heart and  
steeped in his love,  
yet you remain unmoved;  
as though an oil-filled urn  
should stay dry!

343. *prema aḍola ḍulai nahĩm, mumha bolairñ anakḥāi |*  
*cita unakī mūrati basī, citavani māmhi lakḥāi ||*

What her companion said to her

Your love  
steadfast and unwavering

can't be hid, dear girl,  
by a show of rage,  
for your ardent glances  
clearly reveal  
that his image  
is enshrined in your memory.

344. *khimcaim m̄n aparādhahūm, caligai barhaim acaina |  
jurati d̄iṭhi taji risa khisi, haṁse duhuna ke nain ||*

What one of her companions said to another

They could not look  
each other in the eye,  
he from shame  
at his wrongdoing,  
she to keep up the pretence  
of indifference,  
but their ardent love  
weakened their resolve  
and gazing at each other  
they burst out laughing!\*

345. *bidhi bidhi kauni karai ṭarai, nahīm parehū pān |  
citai kitai taim lai dharyau, itau itai tana m̄n ||*

What her companion said to her

Your lover  
has beseeched you  
in all ways,  
even falling at your feet,  
but you're still unmoved.  
Oh god,  
what enormous vanity  
in a puny body!

346. *jadapi lauring lalitau taū, tū na pahiri ik āmk ḷ*  
*sadā sām̃k barhiyai rahai, rahai cathī sī nām̃k ॥*

What her lover said to her

Though this nose ornament  
looks charming on you,  
don't wear it on purpose  
dear girl.

As it is  
you're always  
wrinkling your nose at me  
and the ornament  
makes me feel  
all the more  
that you're putting on airs!\*

## MEETING

347. *lagyo sumanu hvai hai saphala, ātapa ros nivāri |*  
*bauri bārī āpanī, sirñci suhridatā bārī ||*

What her companion said to her

Leave off your anger  
foolish woman,  
You'll have your pleasure  
if you heap endearments on him  
when he comes;  
for a plant  
is sure to bear fruit  
if the gardener  
keeps watering it.\*

348. *dvaija sudhādīdhiti kalā, vaha lakhi dīthi lagāi |*  
*manau akāsa agastiyā, ekai kalī lakhāi ||*

What her messenger said to remind her of her  
promise to meet him near the agastya tree

Feast your eyes,  
dear girl,  
on the new moon  
which in the sky  
is captivating  
as a lone blossom  
on the *agastya* tree.\*

349. *sovat sapanai syāmaghana, hilimili harat biyoga |  
tabahir̥i t̥ari kitahū̃r̥i gai, nī̃mdahur̥i nī̃mdana joga ||*

What she said to her confidante

Asleep

I dreamt Kṛṣṇa clasped me  
driving off  
my parting's grief.

Just then

I know not where  
this wretched sleep vanished,  
leaving me  
forlorn again!\*

350. *ghāma gharika nivāriyai, kalit lalit ali puñj |  
jamunā tīra tamāla taru, mīliti mālātī kuñj ||*

What she told him

Wait for me, lover,  
by the Yamunā bank  
where *mālātī* creepers twine  
round *tamāla* trees.

The sun is hot  
but I won't be long,  
and in that bower  
away from prying eyes  
where the black bees swarm  
we'll make love.\*

351. *sanu sūkyau bityau banau, ūkhau lai ukhāri |  
ari harī arahari ajaun̄i, dhara dharihari hiya nāri ||*

What her confidante said

The fields of hemp,  
cotton and sugarcane  
are bare

but do not lose heart,  
the green *arahar*  
still stands  
where you can meet  
your lover.\*

352. *phiri phiri bilakhi hvai lakhati, phiri phiri leti usās |*  
*sāirī sira kaca seta laurī, bityau cunati kapās ||*

What one of her companions said to another

As an old man  
despondently  
pulling out his grey hair,  
she plucks the cotton  
at the final pick  
looking on in anguish  
sighing mournfully  
again and again;  
recalling  
those rapturous meetings  
which will be no more  
once the field is bare.\*

353. *jadapi teja rauhāla bala, palakau lagī na bāra |*  
*tau gvaimtau ghar kau bhayo, paimtau kos hajāra ||*

What he said to her

Though it took me  
not a moment, love,  
to reach you  
on the swift horse;  
as I neared the house  
it seemed I had gone  
a thousand kos!\*

354. *haraṣi na bolī lakhi lalana, nirakhi amila saṅg sāth |*  
*amkhiyani hī mair̥m haṁsi dharyau, śiśa hiyair̥m dhari hāth ||*

What one of her companions said to another

She was overjoyed  
to find him  
but could not speak her message  
for he sat in the company  
of strangers.

Her smiling glance  
spoke her love,  
and placing her hand  
on her bosom  
and then on her head  
she disclosed to him  
by signs alone  
the rendezvous.\*

355. *gopa athāina tair̥m uṭhe, goraj chāī gail |*  
*cali bali ati abhisāra kī, kharī saṁjhauskair̥m sail ||*

What her confidante told her

The cowherds have left  
the village assembly  
the dust raised by  
cows returning  
fills the pathways;  
I beseech you, dear girl,  
go now to meet your lover  
for dusk is the time for  
love-making.



356. *uyau sarada rāki sasi, karatī na kyaum cīt ceta |*  
*manau madana chitipāla kau, chārn̄hagīra chabi deta ||*

What her messenger said to her

---

Aświn's full moon  
is up  
as Kāma's royal canopy  
scattering brilliance  
on earth.  
It should remind you  
dear girl,  
of a promise.\*

357. *gali andheri sār̄nkarī, bhau bhaṭabherau āni |*  
*pare pichāne parasapara, doṁ parasi pichāni ||*

What one of her companions said to another

---

They chanced upon each other  
in the narrow lane;  
though 'twas too dark to see  
she could know  
it was her lover  
by his very touch  
as she brushed against him.

358. *kahi paṭhai mana bhavati, piya āvana kī bāt |*  
*phūli āṁgana mair̄n phirai, āṁga na āṁgi samāt ||*

What one of her companions said to another

---

Learning of her lover's homecoming  
she walks about her courtyard  
thrilled,  
her breasts  
so swollen with pleasure  
that her bodice  
can't contain them!

359. *ari kharī saṭapaṭa pari, bidhu ādhair̥ maga heri ।  
saṅg lagair̥ madhupana lai, bhāgana gall andheri ॥*

What she said to her confidante

Back from meeting my lover  
on a dark night  
I was unnerved  
to see the moon come out  
when I was only halfway:  
but by my good fortune, friend,  
drawn by my body's fragrance  
black bees  
so swarmed around me  
as I went along  
that I remained hid  
from prying eyes!

360. *nāci acānak hīr̥i uthe, bina pāvasa bana mora ।  
jānati haum̥ nandit karī, ihī disī nandakisora ॥*

What her companion said to her

The peacocks are dancing gleefully  
even though the rainy season  
is not here:  
friend, it seems  
your lover, Kṛṣṇa,  
is coming to end your separation  
and they're mistaking him  
for a dark cloud!

361. *pāvasa nisi andhiyāra mair̥i, rahyau bheda nahir̥i āna ।  
rāti dyaus jānī parat, lakhi cakaī cakavāna ॥*

What her companion said to her

'Tis the rainy season  
when the blanket of thick clouds

lends the day night's darkness  
so that deceived  
the ruddy goose  
calls to his mate.  
No one can see you now  
go with an easy mind, dear girl,  
to meet your lover.\*

362. *rahi paija kinī ju mairī, dīnī tumairī milāi |*  
*rākhahu campakamāla laurī, lāl hiyairī lapaṭai ||*

What her messenger said to him

I swore I'd unite you  
to this precious girl and  
I've redeemed my promise.  
Now keep her  
twined to your bosom  
as you would  
a *campā* garland.\*

363. *ur line ati caṭapaṭi, suni murali dhuni dhāi |*  
*haum hulasi nikasi su tau, gau hula si hiya lāi ||*

What she said to her confidante

The moment I heard  
the sound of his pipe  
I joyfully rushed  
to the rendezvous  
my heart yearning  
for love:  
but he had gone  
leaving me agonized  
as though pierced  
by a lance.

364. *bichuraim jiye sakoca ihiṁ, bolat banat na bain |*  
*doū dauri lage hiyaim, kiye lajaumhairṁ nain ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Embarrassed  
at being still alive  
even though they had avowed  
separation would kill them,  
they spoke not a word  
but with downcast eyes  
rushed into each other's arms.

365. *kiyau sayānī sakhina saum, nahim sayāna yaha bhūl |*  
*durai durāi phūl laum, kyaum piya āgama phūl ||*

What her companion said to her

Smart girl,  
you're mistaken  
if you think you can hide  
from your shrewd companions  
your joy at his homecoming,  
for it suffuses your face  
as perfume  
in a full-blown flower.

366. *rukyaū sāmkare kuñja maga, karat jhām̐jhi jhukarāt |*  
*maṇḍ maṇḍ mārut turaṅg, khūṁdita āvat jāṭ ||*

What she told her confidante when she did  
not find her lover at the rendezvous

Even the gentle breeze  
seems to lash at me, friend,  
like a wayward horse  
which scampers along

a narrow garden path  
crushing the flowers.

367. *uṭhi ṭhaka ṭhaka yetau kahā, pāvasa kairi abhisāra |*  
*jāni paraigī dekhiyaum, dāmini ghana amdhīyāra ||*

What his messenger told her

Hasten dear girl,  
fear not,  
the rains are here  
and the gleam of your body  
is so like a flash of lightning  
in the dark clouds,  
that no busybody'll  
notice you!

## SEPARATION

368. *neha na nainanu kaum kachū, upajī baī balāi |*  
*nīra bhare nīta prati rahaim, taū na pyāsa bujhāi ||*

What she said to her confidante

This is not love;  
it seems my eyes are plagued  
by some vexatious malady  
so that my tears flow  
perennially:  
even then  
they do not relieve  
the thirst of my longing.

369. *lal tihāre vīraha kī, aganī anūpa apāra |*  
*sarasai barasaim nīrahūm, jharahūm mītai na jhāra ||*

What her messenger told him

How strange is  
the never-dying fire  
of her parting  
which all her tears  
cannot put out.  
Even the hot wind  
increases her agony  
instead of soothing her.

370. *yākairi ur aurai kachū, lagī virah kī lāi |*  
*pajaraīnīra gulaba kaini, priya kī bāt bujhāi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Wonderful are the flames  
of her separation;  
they rise more  
when sprinkled with rosewater,  
and die out  
with the gust-shaped talks  
about her lover!\*

371. *homati sukha kari kāmānā, tumahiri milan kī lāl |*  
*jvālāmukhi si jarati lakhi, lagani agani kī jvāl ||*

What her confidante said to him

You should see, dear lad,  
how the flames of love's fire  
consume her.  
Longing for you alone  
she surrenders all her pleasures  
as oblations made in a sacrifice,  
and like an erupting volcano  
smoulders  
with the grief of your parting.

372. *marī dari kī tari bithā, khari kahā calī cāhi |*  
*rahī karāhi atī, karāhi ab munha āhi na āhi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Why do you delay friend?  
Come and see  
if that poor girl is dead,  
or has she got over  
the grief of her separation;  
for she was moaning incessantly till now

but now her moans  
have ceased.

373. *kahā bhayau jau bichure, mo mana to mana sāth |*  
*urī jāhu kita hūm taū, guī urāyaka hāth ||*

What he wrote in his letter to her

What if we are apart  
dear girl?  
You are ever in my thoughts  
as wherever a kite may fly  
the string always remains  
in the flier's hands.\*

374. *kagad par likhat na banai, kahat samdesu lajāta |*  
*kahihai saba terau hiyo, mere hiya ki bāta ||*

Her message to him

My tears of grief  
will not let me write  
what I feel  
and I am too shy  
to speak out my love;  
but your heart knows  
my heart's secret  
and that will reveal  
all I'd like to say.

375. *jab jab vai sudhi kīiyai tabai sabai sudhi jānhi |*  
*āmkhina āmkhi lagī rahaim, ākhaim lāgati nāmhi ||*

What she said to her confidante

The memory of my absent lover  
makes me swoon with grief  
dear friend;  
his charming image



is so much in my eyes  
that sleep eludes them.

376. *kauna sunai kāsauri kahauni, surati bisāri nāha |  
badābadi jiya leta hairi, ye badarā badarāha ||*

What she said to her confidante

To whom shall I tell my sorrow now  
when even my lover  
has forsaken me?  
These malicious clouds  
hovering overhead  
thunder out their rancour  
and agonize me  
all the more.

377. *main ho jānyau loinana, jurat bāthi hai joti |  
ko ho jānata dīthi kauni, dīthi karakāṭi hoti ||*

What he said to his friend

I had thought  
when I gazed into her eyes  
my eyes would gain brilliance;  
but friend, it seems  
they have instead  
become afflicted  
as though by a mote.

378. *basi sakoca dasabadan bas, sāncu dikhāvat bāla |  
siya jyoni sodhati tiya tanahin, lagani agani kī jvāla ||*

What her companion said

Bashfulness,  
like the ten-headed Rāvaṇa  
had deterred her  
from showing her love;

## Separation

but now, dear lad,  
it is made manifest  
by the purifying fire  
of separation.\*

379. *mohū saum̐ taji mohu dṛga, cale lāgi uhi gail ।*  
*chinaka chāi chabi gur-ḍarī, chale chabilaim̐ chail ॥*

What she said to her confidante

As one who lures  
a child with a lump of molasses;  
that handsome lad  
beguiled me  
with just a glimpse  
and then  
went away.  
Ever since  
my eyes no more befriend me,  
for they too  
remain with him.\*

380. *aurai bhānti bhaye ab ye, causara caṇḍana caṇḍa ।*  
*pati bina atī pārāt vipatī, mārāt mārut maṇḍa ॥*

What she said to her confidante

Contrary to their nature  
my four-stringed garland  
moonbeams and sandalwood paste  
afflict me greatly  
ever since he went.  
Friend,  
even the gentle soothing breeze  
seems to stifle me!\*

381. *dekhat vurai kapūr laurī, upai jāi jina lāl |*  
*china china jāti pari kharī, china chabīlī bāla ||*

What her companion told him

Ever since you've gone  
that lovely girl  
grows thinner each moment,  
like camphor  
vapourizing.  
Go to her soon, lad,  
lest she withers away  
and dies.

382. *harṁsi utārī ur tainī daī, tum ju tihi dinā lāl |*  
*rākhati prāna kapūr laurī, vahai cihuṭinī māla ||*

What her companion said

The *ghumghacī* garland  
you took off your bosom and  
in jest placed  
round her neck,  
has saved her life, dear lad,  
or else  
as camphor evaporating,  
her soul  
would have departed.\*

383. *nainka na jhursī biraha-jhar, neha latā kumhlāi |*  
*china china hotī harī harī, kharī jhāhalatī jāi ||*

What her messenger told him

The creeper of her love  
does not sear and wither at all  
with the flames  
of her separation,  
rather it turns

each moment greener  
and more luxuriant.\*

384. *kaḥā kaḥaurṁ vākī dasā, piya prānana ke isa ।  
biraha jvāla jaribo lakhairṁ, maribau bhai asīsa ॥*

What her companion said to her lover, Kṛṣṇa

How should I tell you  
her condition  
O lord of her life,  
Kṛṣṇa;  
the blaze of her parting  
now burns her so grievously that  
death  
would be a blessing.\*

385. *nairṁku na jānī parati yaum, paryau birāha tana chāma ।  
uṭhati diyairṁ laurṁ nāṁdi hari, liyairṁ tihārorṁ nāma ॥*

What her companion said

Parting's grief  
has made the poor girl  
almost a skeleton;  
but when she hears your name  
Kṛṣṇa,  
she rallies somewhat  
as a lamp's flame  
flaring up once  
before it dies.

386. *hari hari bari bari uṭhati hai, kari kari thakī upāi ।  
vākau juru bali baid jau, to rasa jāi tu jāi ॥*

What her companion said to him

Raving suddenly  
she mumbles 'Hari! Hari!'

I have tried all remedies  
but in vain.  
I beseech you  
by my oath,  
hasten, dear lad,  
for only the elixir  
of your love  
can cure the fever  
of her parting.\*

387. *yaha binasata naga rākhikai, jagat barau jasa lehu |  
jari visam jura jyāiye, āi sudarasana dehu ||*

What her companion wrote to him

Do not let this precious girl  
of gem-like loveliness  
die  
of the burning fever  
of separation.  
If you hasten, lad,  
you may save her  
even now  
by your life-giving presence  
and earn  
everybody's esteem.\*

388. *nit sañsau hañsau bacat, manau su ihiñ anumāna |  
biraha agini lapaṭani sakata, jhapaṭi na mīcu sicāna ||*

What her companion said to him

Her parting's grief  
is like a preying hawk  
constantly sweeping down  
to stifle  
her feeble swan-like life-breath.  
She's saved each time

only because  
he can't get through  
the wall-like flames  
of her separation!

389. *thāki jatan aneka kari, naimku na chāmtati gail |*  
*kari kharī dubarī su lagi, terī cāha curail ||*

What her companion said to him

She wastes away  
pining for you  
as though seized by a witch.  
I'm tired out  
trying and trying,  
yet the evil spell  
will not for a moment  
leave her.

390. *kari viraha aisi taū, gail na chāmrata nīcu |*  
*dinain hūm casamā cakhanu, cahai lahai na mīcu ||*

What her companion told him

She has turned so frail  
that Death  
who's after her  
can't spot her  
even with glasses!  
Despite this  
villainous Separation  
keeps pursuing her.

391. *jo vāke tana kī dasā, dekhyau cāhat āp |*  
*tau bali naiku bilokiyai, calī acakām cupacāp ||*

What her confidante said

If you wish to know

for yourself, precious lad,  
what parting has made of her;  
come on the quiet  
I entreat you  
and see her unawares.\*

392. *pūs māsa suni sakhina maim, sām calat savāra |  
laim kar bīna prabīna tiya, rāgyau rāga malāra ||*

What one of her companions said to another  
Learning from her friends  
in the *Pūs* month  
her lover  
was to go abroad  
next morning,  
that girl  
expert on the *viṇā*  
played the *malhāra* tune  
causing such a downpour  
that he couldn't go!\*

393. *marana bhalau baru biraha taim, yaha nihacaya kari joi |  
marana miṭai dukh eka kau, biraha duhūm dukh hoi ||*

What one of her companions said to another  
Know for sure  
death's better for her  
than the distressing sorrow  
of her separation.  
If she dies  
at least grief will be hers no longer,  
or else  
it will keep tormenting  
both her and her lover.\*

394. *ko jānai hvai hai kahā, jaga upajī atī āgi |*  
*mana lāgai nainana lagai, calai na maga laga lāgi ||*

What she said to her companion

Who can say  
what'll happen  
when the fire of separation  
burns so strangely.  
It's ignited  
by the clash of soft eyes  
but flares up  
in the heart!  
I caution you, dear friend,  
not to go  
anywhere near it.\*

395. *malin deha veī basan, malin biraha kairi rūpa |*  
*piya āgama aurai bairī, ānan op anūpa ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Listless with the grief  
of separation  
her body was lustreless  
her clothes unkempt;  
but when she heard her lover was coming  
her face glowed  
with surpassing splendour.

396. *raṅgarātī rātarī hiyarī, priyatama likhī banāī |*  
*pātī kātī biraha kī, chātī rahī lagāī ||*

What one of her companions said to another

She ardently clasped  
to her bosom  
the letter  
full of sweet endearments



he fondly sent  
to console her;  
looking upon it as a sword  
to slay  
the sorrow of her separation.

397. *tajata athān na haṭh paryau, saṭhmati āṭhau jāma |*  
*bhayau bāma vā bāma kaur̥n, rahai kāma bekāma ||*

What her messenger told him

Kāma, the villain,  
does not relent one bit,  
he obstinately persists  
in tormenting that parted girl  
day and night.\*

398. *calat calat laur̥n lai calai, sab sukh saṅg lagāi |*  
*gr̥ṣma bāsar sis̥ir-nis̥i, pyau mo pās basāi ||*

What she said to her companion

Though he's still here  
the thought of his going  
has taken away my joys.  
With his departure  
my lover will leave me  
oppressive days  
recalling  
summer's sultriness  
and weary wintry nights.

399. *bikasit navamallī kusum, nikasit parimal pāi |*  
*parasi pajārati birahi hiya, barasi rahe kī bāi ||*

What she said to her companion

When in the rains  
the cool breeze

## Separation

laden with the perfume  
of new jasmine blossoms  
brushes my bosom,  
it heightens the grief  
of my separation  
and burns me  
all the more.

400. *ajaurā na āye saḥaj raṅg, biraha-dūbare gāt |*  
*abahrī kahā calāiyati, lalan calan kī bāt ||*

What her companion said to him

Dear lad,  
why are you talking  
from now  
of leaving again,  
when even today  
her body,  
emaciated by the grief of parting  
has not regained  
its former loveliness?\*

401. *aurādhāi sisl su lakhi, biraha barani bilālāt |*  
*bica hī sūkhi gulāba gau, chītau chūī na gāt ||*

What her companion said to him

Hearing her moan  
with the burning pain  
of parting  
I emptied a whole bottle  
of rosewater on her;  
but the flames of his separation  
vapourized it in mid-air  
and not a drop  
fell on her!

402. *mṛganainī dṛga kī pharak, ur uchaha tana phūl |*  
*binahīn piya āgama umagi, palaṭan lagī dukūl ||*

What one of her companions said to another

There was no news  
of his coming  
yet her longing made  
her bosom heave  
her left eyelid flicker;  
and hopefully  
that gazelle-eyed girl  
changed her dress  
all ready to  
receive him!\*

403. *rahe baroṭhe mairī milat, piya prānana ke Isu |*  
*āvat āvat kī bhaī, bidhi kī gharī gharī su ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Returning from abroad  
when her lover stopped awhile  
in the vestibule  
to greet his elders  
and near friends,  
those few minutes  
seemed to that expectant girl  
as long as  
Brahmā's epoch!\*

404. *haurī hīn baurī biraha basa, kai baurī saba gaurī |*  
*kahā jāni ye kahat hain, sasihīn sītakara naurī ||*

What she said to her companion

Either the grief of my parting  
has deranged my mind  
or the village people

## Separation

have turned crazy,  
or else  
why should they call the moonbeams cool  
when they scorch me so?\*

405. *kaṭā āṁsū būṁd, kaṣī sāṁkara baruṁṁ sajal |*  
*kīṇe badan nīmūṁd, dṛga-malaṅga dāre rahat ||*

What her companion said to him

She sits tight-lipped  
silently grieving for you, lover,  
like a *malaṅga* fakir  
in quiet meditation.  
Her moist eyelids  
are as iron chains  
hackling his limbs  
and the tear-drops  
imprisoned  
are like his string  
of cowries.\*

406. *jonha nahīm yaha tama vahai, kiye ju jagat niketa |*  
*hot udai sasi ke bhayau, mānahu sasihari seta ||*

What she said to her companion

This is not moonlight friend,  
it seems  
the eternal darkness  
enveloping the earth  
has turned yellow with fear  
on seeing the moon arise!

407. *jihim nidāgh dupahara rahai, bhai māha ki rāti |*  
*so usir ki rāvaṭi, kharī āvaṭi jāti ||*

What her messenger told him

So great is the fire  
of her separation  
that even the *khas* curtains  
which give the coolness of *Māgh* nights  
to hot summer noons,  
seem to burn her!\*

408. *sirairi jatanani sisir ritu, sahi birahini-tana-tāpa |*  
*basibe kauri grīsam dinana, paryau parosina pāpa ||*

What her messenger told him

In winter  
by using cooling devices  
her neighbours  
somehow saved themselves  
from being scorched  
by the flames of separation  
which arose from her;  
but in summer  
their sizzling heat  
became unbearable!\*

409. *ganati ganibe tairi rahe, chat hūri achat samāna |*  
*ab patrā tithi aum lauri, pare rahau tana prāna ||*

What she said to her companion

The grief of separation  
has so exhausted me friend,  
that though living  
I'm as good as dead,  
as the *avam* lunar day

which remains in the almanac  
but is of no consequence.\*

410. *jāti marī bichurī ghari, jala safari kī rīti |*  
*china china hotī khari khari, arī jarī yaha prīti ||*

What she said to her confidante

This accursed parting  
so torments me, friend,  
that each moment  
I writhe with pain  
as a fish without water.  
Even then my wretched infatuation  
keeps mounting  
more and more!

411. *piya prānan kī pāharū, karat jatan atī āp |*  
*jāki dusaha dasā paryau, sautinhūrn santāp ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Her co-wives know  
that if she dies  
of the grief of parting  
their husband too can't live,  
so distressed by her condition  
they themselves try all ways  
to save her.

412. *āre dai āle basan, jātehūrn kī rāti |*  
*sāhasa kakai saneha bas, sakhi sabai dhiga jāti ||*

What her messenger said to him

So fiercely does she burn  
with the flames of separation  
that even on winter nights  
her fond companions

have to take courage to go near her,  
and that too  
by holding a wet cloth before them  
to shield them from the scorching heat!

413. *saba aṅga kari rākhī sughara, nāik neha sikhāi |*  
*rasajut leti ananta gati, putarī pāturarāi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

The pupils of her eyes  
moving restlessly  
as she oft glances  
on the path of his coming,  
are like accomplished dancers  
trained by his love  
skilfully adopting  
many poses.

414. *sunat pathik murinḥa māha nisi, calati luvairi uhirḥi gāma |*  
*bina bujhe binahī kahe, jiyat bicarī bāma ||*

What one of her companions said to another

When a wayfarer  
come from his village said  
'Even in the chilly *Māgh* nights  
the scorching *lū* winds blow there',  
he guessed without being told  
that his wife  
though burning with the grief of parting  
was still alive.\*

415. *tiya nija hiya ju lagī calat, piya nakh rekh kharīroṭ |*  
*sūkhan deti na sarasāi, khorṇṭi khorṇṭi khat khorṇṭ ||*

What one of her companions said to another

She keeps removing the scales

from the nail scratches  
made by her lover on her breasts  
when he ardently hugged her  
before going abroad,  
and keeps them fresh  
to treasure in her mind  
the memory of his embrace.

416. *māra su māra karī khari, mari marihi na māri |*  
*sīnci gulāba ghari ghari, ari barihi na bāri ||*

What she said to her companion

Kāma has greatly vexed me  
leaving me almost dead,  
pray do not increase my agony  
by sprinkling rosewater on me  
for it only causes  
the fire of separation  
to flare up all the more!

417. *it āvat cali jāt ut, cali chasātak hāth |*  
*carhi hīndoraim si rahai, lagi usāsanu sāth ||*

What one of her companions said to another

She has turned so frail  
with the grief of her separation  
that her deep sighs  
throw her back and forth  
six or seven cubits  
as though she was going  
to and fro  
on a swing!



418. *tar jharasi ūpar garī, kajjal jala chirakāi |*  
*piya pāṭi binahīm likhī bāñcī biraha balāi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

When he got her letter  
charredbeneath  
by her burning fingers  
and smudged with tears  
from her collyrium-filled eyes  
he could know the grief  
of her separation  
even though she wrote  
not a word about it.

419. *biraha sukhāi deha, neha kiyau ati ḍaḥaḍaho |*  
*jaise barase meha, jarai jvaso jyau jamai ||*

What her companion said to him

As the rain  
shrivels up the stems  
of the *jawāsa* plant  
but makes its roots firm,  
her parting's grief  
has emaciated her body  
but made strong her love.\*

420. *lalana calana suni palana mainī, aṁsuvā jhalake āi |*  
*bhaī lakhāi na sakhina hūm, jhūṭhaihūm jamuhāi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

When she heard  
her lover was going abroad  
tears welled in her eyes,  
but not wishing to reveal  
to her friends  
her love for him

she forced a yawn,  
pretending it was that  
which had brought them on!

421. *tacyau ānica ab biraha kī, rahyau prema rasa bhīji ।  
nainan kaim maga jala bahai, hiyau pasiji pasiji ॥*

What her companion said

Those are not tears  
flowing from her eyes, dear lad,  
to me it seems  
separation's fire  
has so heated up  
her love-juice soaked heart  
that it's oozing out  
drop by drop!

422. *rahihaim cancala prāna ye, kahi kaun kī agoṭ ।  
lalan calan kī cit dhari, kala na palan kī oṭ ॥*

What she said to her companion

When I can't bear  
to part from him  
even for a moment,  
what's there to keep me alive  
now that my lover  
has decided to go abroad?

423. *rahyo aimci aṇta na lahyau, avadhi dusāsana biru ।  
ālī bāṭhat biraha jyaurṇ, pañcālī ko cīru ॥*

What she said to her companion

As the hour of his return nears  
my parting's grief grows more;  
dear friend,  
it seems to be endless

as Draupadi's sari  
pulled by Duhaśāsana.\*

424. *pāvaka jhara ta meha jhara, dāhaka dusaha bisekhi ।  
dahai deha vākaum̐ parasi, yāhi dṛgana hī dekhi ॥*

What she said to her companion

Without my lover, friend,  
this pouring rain  
torments me more  
than flames of fire.  
They burn only by their touch  
but this  
by its mere sight!

425. *na jak dharat hari hiya dharat, nājuk kamalā bāla ।  
bhajat bhār bhayabhīt hvai, ghana caṇḍana banamāla ॥*

What Kṛṣṇa's messenger said to her

Dear girl  
delicate as Lakṣmi,  
Kṛṣṇa has stopped  
smearing his bosom  
with camphor-and-sandal paste  
fearing it will be a burden  
to your tender image  
enshrined in his heart!  
Go to him  
and remove  
the grief of his parting.

426. *lalan calan suni cuṭpa rahī, bolī āpu na īṭhi ।  
gāthe gahi rākhyauri garau, manau galagali dīṭhi ॥*

What one of her companions said to another

Hearing her lover

was going abroad  
she became speechless,  
as though throttled  
by her tearful eyes  
her throat  
had lost its voice!

427. *biraha-bithā jala parasa bina, basiyat mo hiya-tāl |*  
*kachu jānat jalathambha-bidhi, durajodhana laurṁ lāl ||*

What she wrote in her letter to him

Though enshrined in my heart, lover,  
you're untouched  
by the grief  
of my separation,  
as Duryodhana  
who could stay under water  
and yet remain unharmed.\*

428. *syaurṁ bijurī mana meha, āi ihām birahā dhare |*  
*āṭham jāma acheha, drga ju barat barasat rahat ||*

What she said to her confidante

Day and night  
my eyes keep burning  
and at the same time  
shedding tears,  
it seems as though  
parting has brought them  
lightning as well as rain.\*

429. *biraha bipat dina paratahīm, taje sukhana saba aṅga |*  
*rahi abalaurṁ ab dukhau bhaye, calācalī jiya-saṅga ||*

What she wrote in her letter

When you went, lover,

all pleasures forsook my limbs,  
and now this separation  
has become so grievous  
that my soul too is preparing  
to bid adieu.

430. *chayau neha kāgad hiyaiṁ, bhaī lakhāi na tāmka |*  
*biraha tacaiṁ ugharayau su ab, seṁhura kaiso āmka ||*

What one of her companions said to another

The fire of separation  
has revealed the love  
hid in her heart  
as letters written  
with invisible ink  
standing out  
when parched by heat.\*

431. *bana-bātan pik-baṭaparā, lakhi birahani mat main |*  
*kuhū kuhū kahi kahi uṭhaim, kari kari rāte nain ||*

What she said to her lover about to go on a voyage

As a wayfarer  
done to death  
on a forest pathway,  
I'll be slain  
by the plaintive calls  
of the cuckoo,  
if leaving me  
you go abroad.

432. *ghana gherā chuṭi gau harasi, calī cahūn disi rāha |*  
*kiyau sucainau āi jaga, sarada-sūra naranāha ||*

What her companion said to her

Like bandits fleeing

## Separation

a dreaded ruler's realm  
the encircling clouds have been scattered  
by King Autumn;  
wayfarers can once again  
move happily on pathways:  
he'll come any moment now  
dear girl,  
to end your separation.

433. *nāhina ye pāvak prabal, luvaiṁ calaiṁ cahum pās |  
manahu biraha basant kaim, grīṣam let usās ||*

What the parted girl's companion said

These gusts of wind  
searing as tongues of fire  
are not the *lū*, dear girl,  
it seems they are  
the sighs of Summer  
sorrowing on being separated  
from Spring his beloved!\*

434. *hiya aurai sī hvai gai, tarī audhi kai nāma |  
dūjaim kai dāri khari, bauri bauraim āma ||*

What one of her companions said to another

She was dismayed to learn  
that her lover's arrival  
had been put off,  
and the grief of her separation  
became so unbearable  
that even the sight  
of the new mango blossoms  
maddened her.

435. *pahirati hīṁ goraiṁ garaiṁ, yaum daurī duti lālī |  
manau parasi pulakit bhai, maulasiri ki māla ||*

What her companion told him

When she put the *maulasiri* garland  
sent by you, dear lad,  
round her neck  
it seemed to her  
you yourself  
had clasped her!  
and thrilling with joy  
her pale limbs  
shone with a new splendour.\*

436. *kar ke mire kusuma laurī, gai biraha kumhilāi |  
sadā samīpini sakhina hūṁ, nīṭhi pichānī jāi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Parting's grief  
has made her pale  
as a crushed flower  
so that even her companions  
who are with her all the time  
find it hard  
to recognize her!

437. *bhau yaha aisoi samau, jahān sukhad dukh det |  
caitra cāṁda ki cāṁdanī, dāratī kiye aceta ||*

What she said to her companion

So grievous is this parting  
that things which should delight  
torment me;  
friend,  
even the serene moonlight

*Separation*

of Caitra  
agitates me!\*

438. *lope kope indra laurñ, rope pralaya akāla |  
giridhārī rākhe sabai, go gopī gopāla ||*

What Rādhā's messenger said to Kṛṣṇa

Grieved by your separation  
Rādhā, who adores you,  
is shedding streams of tears  
which threaten to cause  
the world's dissolution  
before its time!  
O Kṛṣṇa,  
even as you lifted a hill  
to protect the cowherds  
from Indra's wrath,  
go to her now  
and caressing her expansive breasts,  
save the world.\*

439. *hyārñ tairñ hvārñ hvārñ tairñ ihārñ, naiko dharat na dhīra |  
nisi dina dāthī sī phirati, bārñ gāthī pīra ||*

What her companion told him

Burning constantly  
with the grief of separation  
she restlessly wanders  
back and forth  
and does not know  
a moment's rest.



440. *biraha bikal bina hi likhi, pātī dai paṭhāi |*  
*aṅk bihūṇiyau sucita, sūnairi bāṁcati jāi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

The grief of separation  
so tormented her  
that she could not write a word  
and sent him a blank sheet!  
Even that  
he pretends to read attentively  
when he's by himself!

441. *arairi parai na karai hiyau, kharai jarairi par jāra |*  
*lāvati ghorī gulāba saurī, bhalai milai ghanasāra ||*

What she said to her companion

Do not persist  
in applying this unguent  
of sandalwood paste  
camphor  
and rosewater  
on my bosom  
burning with separation's grief,  
for it makes it burn  
all the more!

442. *mairi lai dayau layau su kara, chuata chanaki gau nīra |*  
*lāl tiharau aragajā, ur hvai lagyau abīra ||*

What her companion told him

So greatly does she burn  
with the grief of separation, dear lad,  
that the moment I placed  
the perfume you sent  
in her hands  
it sizzled away,

## Separation

and by the time  
she applied it to her bosom  
it had turned into  
useless powder!\*

443. *kahe ju bacana biyoginī, biraha bikaḥ bilālāi |*  
*kiye na ko aṁsuvā sahit, suvā su bola sunāi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Her tame parrot had learnt  
what she had said  
in the deep anguish of her separation,  
and when he repeats  
those pathetic words  
whose eyes  
can remain dry?\*

444. *dhuravā hohim na ali uṭhai, dhuvārṇa dharani cahurṇ koda |*  
*jārata āvat jagat kaurn, pāvāsa prathama payoda ||*

What the parted girl said to her confidante

This is not drizzle, friend,  
but smoke billowing all round;  
to me it seems  
the first clouds of the rains come  
scorching the earth  
as they move along!

445. *pajarau āgi biyoga ki, bahyau bilocana nīra |*  
*āṭhaurn jāma diyau rahai, utyau usās samīra ||*

What her messenger told him

She's scorched  
in separation's fire  
and drenched by tears;  
her heart seems to float away

dear lad,  
on her endless sighs  
as a kite  
meandering.\*

446. *veī cirajivī amar, nidharaka phirau kahāi |*  
*china bichure jinakī na yahi, pāvāsa āyu sirāi ||*

What she said to her lover to persuade him not to go abroad

Only he has long life  
assuredly,  
who is not parted  
from his beloved  
even for a moment  
in this ravishing rainy season.\*

447. *maribai kau sāhasa kakaim, barhaim biraha kī pīra |*  
*daurati hvai samuhe sasi, sarasija surabhi samīra ||*

What her companion told him

The moon  
the lotus flower and  
the perfumed breeze  
seem to scorch her,  
and she rushes after them  
so that she may be burnt to death  
and end  
the unbearable anguish  
of her separation.

448. *hita kari tum paṭhayau lagaim, vā bijanā kī bāi |*  
*talī tapatī tana kī tāū, calī pasinā nhāi ||*

What her messenger told him

The fan which you sent her  
as a gift of love

*Separation*

fanned away the heat  
from her body  
burning with the grief of separation,  
but so thrilled her  
with your fond remembrance  
that she was bathed with sweat!

449. *sakai satāya na tamu biraha, nisi dīna sarasa sanēha |  
rahai uhi lāgi dṛgana, dipasikhā si deha ||*

What he told her messenger

The darkness of separation  
is powerless to cause me gloom,  
for day and night  
her charming adorable image  
shining like the flame of a lamp  
is treasured in my memory.

450. *biraha jari lakhi jiganani, kahyau na dahi kai bāra |  
ari jāhi bhaji bhītari, barasat āj aṅgāra ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Seeing the glow-worms blink  
how many times  
has that girl  
burning with the anguish of separation  
not said to me,  
'Hasten inside, friend,  
the sky is raining embers!'

451. *jo tab hot dikhādikhī, bhai amī ik āṅk |  
lagai tirichī dīthi ab, hvai bichī ko dāṅk ||*

What the parted girl said to her companion

Those sidelong glances  
we exchanged

when love began  
were assuredly  
sweet as nectar,  
but now that he's gone  
their memory  
has a scorpion's sting.

452. *cāha bharīm ati rasa bharīm, biraha bharīm saba bāt |  
kori samdese duhuna ke, cale pauri laur jāt ||*

What one of her companions said to another

By the time they reached  
the outer door of the house  
they had exchanged  
a million messages,  
which spoke their ardour  
their tender yearnings and  
the poignant grief  
of their parting.\*

453. *mili cali cali mili mili mili calat, aṅganā athayau bhān |  
bhayau muhūrat bhor kau, paurihim pratham milān ||*

What one of her companions said to another

The auspicious time  
for him to go  
was in the morning,  
but he could not tear himself  
from his beloved,  
and he stopped  
to bid her farewell  
again and again  
till the day passed  
ere he reached his doorstep!

454. *kara lai cūmi carhāi sir, ur lagāi bhuḡ bheṭi |*  
*lahi pāṭi piya kī lakhati, bāmcati dharati sameṭi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Beside herself with joy  
 to get her husband's letter  
 she read it  
 and on an impulse  
 pressed it to her bosom  
 and hugged it lovingly.  
 She often glances at it ardently  
 and scans it again and again  
 before she carefully  
 keeps it away.

455. *palani pragaṭi barunīni barhi, nahim kapol ṭaharāt |*  
*amsuvā pari chatiyā chinaka, chanachanāi chipi jāṭ ||*

What her messenger told him

The fire of separation  
 blazes so fiercely in her  
 that the tears  
 which gather in her eyes,  
 and overflowing  
 roll past her burning cheeks,  
 fall on her scalding bosom  
 and sizzling  
 evaporate!

456. *phiri sudhi dai sudhi dyāi pyau, ihim niradaī nirāsa |*  
*naī naī bahuryau daī, daī usāsi usāsa ||*

What one of her companions said to another

This cruel sparrow-hawk  
 calls out 'pi! pi!'  
 awaking in her

memories of her beloved  
and making her sigh again  
with grief.\*

457. *koṭi jatan koṁ karau, tana kī tapana na jāi |*  
*jaum laum bhijai cira laum, rahe na pyau lapaṭai ||*

What the parted girl said to her confidante

Even though I try  
a million ways  
the fire of separation's grief  
will not go out  
until my lover  
hugs me close  
as a wet garment  
clinging to the body.

458. *dusaha biraha dārun dasā, rahai na aur upāi |*  
*jāt jāt jyau rākhiyai, piya kau nāum sunāi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

See the miserable state  
to which  
the unbearable grief of separation  
has reduced her, friend.  
The only way now  
to save her from death  
is to repeat to her  
her lover's name.

459. *ab taji nāum upaya kau, āyau pāvasa māsa |*  
*khela na rahibau khema saum, kema kusuma kī bāsa ||*

What his messenger said

She'll need no persuasion now, lad,  
and come to you of herself  
for the heart-stirring rains

are here  
bringing with them  
the voluptuous fragrance  
of the *kadamba* flower.\*

460. *saghan kuñj chāyā sukhad, sital surabhi samīra |*  
*manu hvai jāt ajaum vahai, uhi jamunā ke tīra ||*

What one milkmaid said to another

When Kṛṣṇa's remembrance  
takes me  
to the lonely Yamunā bank  
where we made love,  
the pleasing shade  
of the thick woods  
and the gentle breeze  
cool and fragrant  
fills my heart  
with yearning.\*

461. *bāmā bhāmā kāmīnī, kahi bolau prānesa |*  
*pyārī kahat khisāt nahim, pābas calat bidesa ||*

What she said to her lover who was going abroad

You call me 'beloved'  
while saying goodbye,  
but if I had been your true love  
you wouldn't be so heartless  
as to leave me alone  
in this exciting rainy season.  
Your callousness  
makes me feel  
you rather take me to be  
a vixen,  
shrew,  
or a wanton!



## BEAUTY

462. *appane aṅga ke jānikai, jobana nṛpati prabīna |*  
*stana mana nain nitamba kau, baṭau ijāfā kīna ||*

What her companion told him

King Adolescence  
now rules that pliant girl  
swelling out  
her breasts and loins  
enlarging her eyes and  
filling her mind  
with love's longing.

463. *ar terā tarat na bara pare, dāī marak manu main |*  
*hotīhorā bathī cale, citu caturāī nain ||*

What her companion said to him

Her glance's ardour and  
her mind's longing  
have bet on a race.  
Spurred by Kāma  
each is bent on  
making the winning post!\*

464. *aurai op kanīnikani, ganī ghani siratāja |*  
*manī dhanī ke neha kī, banī chanī paṭa lāja ||*

What her companion said to her

Dear girl  
of beauty nonpareil,  
your glances

have now turned ardent;  
and even though veiled  
by your bashfulness  
the pupils of your eyes,  
glinting with a new light,  
shine out as gems  
proclaiming your love for him.

465. *sālati hai naṭasāla sī, kaurīhūm nikasati nāhīm |*  
*manamatha nejā nok sī, khubhī khubhī mana māhīm ||*

What he said to her confidante

My girl's  
clove-shaped ear ornament  
has pierced my heart  
like Kāma's arrowhead;  
its memory pains me  
as an embedded barb.\*

466. *juvati jonha mairī mili gal, nairīka na hoti lakhāī |*  
*saum̐dhe kairī dorairī lagī, alī calī sarīga jāī ||*

What her companion said

Her bright radiance  
was so like moonlight  
that it was impossible to spot her;  
her friend could keep up with her  
only by the string  
of her fragrance!\*

467. *haurī rijhī lakhi rijhīhau, chabihīm chabīle lāl |*  
*sonajuhī sī hoti dutī, milat mālātī mālā ||*

What her messenger said to him

You will be spellbound  
by her loveliness

even as I was, dear lad:  
the radiance of her limbs  
makes the white *mālatī* flowers  
in her garland  
glow golden  
as the *sonajūhī*!

468. *joga jugati sikhae sabai, manau mahāmuni maina |*  
*cāhat piya advaitatā, kānanu sevāt nain ||*

What her companion said

As sages adept in meditation  
go to the forest  
to seek union with god,  
so, instructed by Kāma  
the great teacher,  
her eyes  
greedy for love,  
stretch out to her ears  
proclaiming  
she is restless  
to meet her lover.\*

469. *jhinai paṭa mainī jhīlamīlī, jhalakati op apāra |*  
*surataru kī manu sindhu mainī, lasati sapallava ḍāra ||*

What he said about her

Her dazzling splendour  
shining through her flimsy dress  
is breathtaking,  
as a *kalpa* tree  
reflected leaf and branch  
in the waters  
of the placid ocean.\*

470. *ḍāre ṭhotī-gāra gahi, nain baṭohī māri |*  
*cilaka caurndha meri rūpa ṭhag, hāmsī phāmsī ḍāri ||*

What he said to her companion

As a wayfarer  
mistaking brilliant starlight for day  
moves on;  
and smothered by a thug's noose  
is cast in a pit:  
so her dazzling radiance  
led me onwards  
till  
strangled with the noose of her smile  
I lay  
in the hollow of her chin's dimple!\*

471. *to para barāurī urabasi, suni rādhikā sujāna |*  
*tu mohana kairī ur basī, hvai urabasi samāna ||*

What Rādhā's companion said

Gifted Rādhā,  
your beauty  
puts Uravāsī's  
into the shade.  
You ever dwell  
in Kṛṣṇa's heart  
like a necklace of gold  
dangling  
between the breasts.\*

472. *kuca-giri cati ati thakit hvai, calī ḍīṭhi murīha cāra |*  
*phiri na ṭarī pariyai rahī, parī cibuka kī gāra ||*

What he said

Exhausted with climbing  
her steep breasts,

my gaze yet moved on  
craving to see  
her face's ravishing beauty;  
but in between  
it tumbled  
into the hollow of her chin  
and there it remained stuck!

473. *lone murhhu dīthi na lagi, yauri kahi dīnau īthi |*  
*dūnī hvai lāgana lagi, diyairi dīthaunā dīthi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

The black mark  
her friend put on her cheek  
to guard her from the evil eye  
heightened her charm so greatly  
that men's gazes turned to her  
all the more!\*

474. *pāi mahāvara dena kaun, nāini baiṭhi āi |*  
*phiri phiri jāni mahāvari, eti mījata jāi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Her heels were so rosy  
that when the barber's wife  
sat down to paint her feet  
instead of squeezing  
the lacquer-soaked cotton  
she kept pressing her heels  
again and again!\*

475. *deha dulaḥiyā kī cathai, jyaum̐ jyaum̐ jobana joti |*  
*tyaum̐ tyaum̐ lakhi sautyaum̐ sabai, malin badan duti hoti ||*

What one of the companions of the newly-wed wife said to

another

The more her youthful splendour  
blossoms out  
taking on a new lustre,  
the paler turn  
her jealous co-wives!\*

476. *maṅgala bindu suraṅga, mukha sasi kesara āra guru |*  
*ik nārī lahi saṅga, rasamaya kiya locana jagat ||*

What he said to her confidante

As Mars, Jupiter and the Moon  
combine  
to revive the parched earth  
with life-giving rain,  
her forehead marks  
of red and yellow  
make lovelier  
her moonlike face  
and relieve the thirst  
of my eyes.\*

477. *piya tiya saum̐ haṁsikai kahyau, lakhain̐ dīṭhaunā dīna |*  
*caṇḍramukhī mukhacaṇḍu tain̐, bhalau caṇḍa sama kīna ||*

What he said to her

Seeing her put on  
the round black mark  
to keep off the evil eye  
he smiled and said  
'Your moon-like face darling

now really looks  
like the spotted moon!\*

478. *kaurhara-sī etina kī, lālī dekhi subhāi |*  
*pāi mahavara dei ko, āpa bhai bepāi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

When the barber's wife  
came to dye her heels  
with the lacquer dye  
she found their ruddiness  
matching the red gourd;  
perplexed  
she stayed her hands,  
not knowing what to do.\*

479. *rasa sirṅgāra mañjanu kiye, kañjanu bhañjanu dain |*  
*añjanu rañjanu hūm binā, khañjanu gañjanu nain ||*

What her companion said

Though collyriumless  
the coquettish eyes  
of that girl  
adept in the art of love-making  
have put to shame  
those of the *khañjana* bird;  
even the lotus  
pales before their loveliness!\*

480. *baiṭhi rahī atī saghan bana, paiṭhi sadan mana māhim |*  
*dekhi dupaharī jeth kī, chāmhaurī cāhati chāmhī ||*

So oppressive  
is *Jeth's* midday sun  
that even the Shade  
seeks shelter under forest trees

and dare not venture beyond  
the four walls of houses!\*

481. *hā hā badan ughāri dṛga, suphal karaim̐ sab kou |*  
*roja sarojana kaim parai, haṁsī saśī kī hou ||*

What her companion said

O! O! dear girl  
unveil yourself  
so that men may feast their eyes  
upon your face  
whose beauty  
grieves the envious lilies  
and puts the moon to shame!\*

482. *sāyaka sama māyaka nayan, raṅge tribidha raṅga gāta |*  
*jhakau bilakhi duri jāt jala, lakhi jalajāta lajāta ||*

What her messenger said to him

Mistaking  
her crimson-streaked  
coquettish eyes  
for twilight  
fishes regretfully hid  
in the deep waters;  
and, put to shame,  
the water-lilies  
closed up their petals!\*

483. *bar jīte sar main ke, aise dekhe main̐ na |*  
*harinī ke naināna taim̐, hari nīke ye nain ||*

What her companion told Kṛṣṇa

I never saw such eyes  
with glances more piercing  
than Kāma's arrows;



O Kṛṣṇa,  
their loveliness  
indeed surpasses  
the eyes of a gazelle.\*

484. *aṅga aṅga naga jagamagāta, dipasikhā śī deha |*  
*diyā barhāye hū rahai, barau ujārau geha ||*

What her companion said

All over  
her flame-like body  
gleam  
the gems of her ornaments.  
Their flashing brilliance  
lights up her house  
even after she puts out  
the oil lamp!\*

485. *chuṭi na sisutā kī jhalak, jhalakyau jobana aṅga |*  
*dīpati deha duhūna mili, dīpati tāfatā raṅga ||*

What her companion said

Ere childhood has left  
youth sparkles in her  
as though the flames  
of the two had met.  
Her body's lustre  
glimmers now  
as double-tinted silk.\*

486. *patrā hīṁ tithi pāiyai, vā ghar kaim cahuṁ pās |*  
*nītaprati pūnyauṁ rahai, ānana op ujās ||*

What her companion said

Around her house  
the phases of the moon

can be known only  
by the almanac;  
for when the full moon  
of her face is ever there  
how can one know  
when the moon rises?

487. *calan na pāvat nigam maga, jaga upajau ati trāsa |*  
*kuca utaṅga giribara gahyau, mainā maina mavāsa ||*

What he said about her

As travellers shun  
a hill-road  
ravaged by a Mainā bandit;  
those who glance on  
her swelling breasts  
where Kāma reigns,  
abandon virtue.\*

488. *gadarāne tana goratī aipana ātā lilāra |*  
*hūthyau dai iṭhalāi dr̥ga, karai gamvāri sumāra ||*

What he said

How captivating are  
the banter  
and the coquettish glances  
of that fair rustic girl  
in the bloom of youth,  
who stands akimbo,  
an oblique beauty mark  
of rice and turmeric  
adorning her brow!\*

489. *sahaja sacikkana syāma ruci, suci sugaṇḍha sukumāra |*  
*ganata na mana patha apatha lakhi, bithure suthare bāra ||*

What he said to his confidant

When she spreads out  
her naturally glistening  
smooth unsullied  
fragrant black  
tresses,  
my mind remains  
so entangled in them  
that it cares not  
for propriety.

490. *kesari kai sari kyauri sakai, campaka kitika anūpa |*  
*gāt rūpa lakhi jāta duri, jātārūpa kau rūpa ||*

What her companion told him

Saffron can't equal  
her loveliness  
nor the *campā* flower  
her splendour;  
even the lustre of gold  
pales before her!\*

491. *makarākṛti gopāla kaini, sohat kuṇḍala kāna |*  
*manau dharyau hiya dhara samaru, ḍyaurhī lasat nisāna ||*

What her companion said to her

Kṛṣṇa's  
fish-shaped ornament  
is resplendent in his ears  
as though Kāma,  
winning over his heart,  
had planted his standard on the  
entranceway!\*

492. *khauri panica bhṛkuṭi dhanuṣa, badhika samara taji kāni |*  
*hanata taruna mṛga tilak sara, suraka bhāli bhari tāni ||*

What he said to her confidante

Hereyebrows  
are as a bow,  
her forehead's auspicious mark  
its bowstring,  
and the ornamental line  
extending to her nose's bridge  
the shaft's pointed barb  
with which Kāma,  
bow full-stretched  
pierces the hearts  
of her youthful admirers,  
as a huntsman  
shooting gazelles.\*

493. *nīkau lasata lilāra par, tīkau jaṭil jarāi |*  
*chabihim bathāvata ravi manau, sasi maṇḍala mairi āi ||*

What her companion said

The gem-studded pendant  
on her forehead  
flashes  
as though the sun  
had entered the moon's orbit  
to heighten its splendour.  
And wonderfully  
her moon-like face  
does not pale  
in the sun-like radiance  
but rather shines  
all the more!\*

494. *lasata seta sārī dhapyau, taral taryaunā kāna |*  
*paryau manau surasari salila, rabi pratibimba bihāna ||*

What her companion said to him

Her ear ornament  
quivering in her white sari  
when she thrills with love,  
seems as the golden ripples  
of the rising sun  
reflected in the Gāṅgā waters.

495. *vāhi lakhaim loin lagai, kauna juvatī kī joti |*  
*jākaim tana kī chāmha dhiga, jonha chāmha sī hoti ||*

What her companion told him

After seeing her  
who is the girl  
whose splendour can catch  
the eye?  
Even her shadow  
makes the moonlight  
seem as shade!

496. *jyaum jyaum jobana jeṭh dina, kuca miti ati adhikāti |*  
*tyaum tyaum china china kaṭi chapā, chīna parati sī jāti ||*

What her companion said to him

As *Jeṭh*  
gives the days more hours  
and the nights fewer,  
adolescence  
swells out her breasts and  
makes her waist  
more slender.\*

497. *kahi lahi kauna sakai duri, saunajāi mairi jāi |*  
*tana ki sahaja subāsa ban, deti jau na batāi ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Say, who could have spotted her  
amidst the yellow jasmine creepers  
if it wasn't for  
the natural fragrance  
of her limbs?

498. *jaṭita nilamani jagamagati, sīrk suhāi nāmkā |*  
*manau ali campaka-kali, basi rasa leta nisāmkā ||*

What her companion said to him

Fascinating, dear lad,  
is the glimmer  
of the sapphire  
in her nose-pin;  
it seems as though  
a meandering black bee  
alighting for once  
on a *campā* flower  
were fearlessly sucking  
its nectar.\*

499. *lai cubhaki cali jāti jita, jita jala keli adhira |*  
*kijāt kesari nira se, tita tita ke sari nira ||*

What her companion said to him

Wherever that girl  
skilled in the water sport  
swiftly plunges,  
the river's water  
shimmers  
saffron yellow.\*

500. *lāl alaukika larikai, lakhi lakhi sakhi sihānti ||*  
*ājakālahi maim dekhiyat, ur uksaurmhīm bhānti ||*

What her messenger told him

Dear lad,  
seeing the peerless charm  
of that girl's youth  
even her companions  
envy her;  
her breasts  
are about to swell  
any time now.

501. *besari motī dutī jhalaka, parī oṭha par āi |*  
*cūnau hoi na catura tiya, kyaum paṭa pomchayau jāi ||*

What her companion said

That's not lime  
O foolish woman  
which you're trying to wipe off  
with your sari-end,  
it's only the glimmer  
cast on you lips  
by the pearl  
in your nose-ring!\*

502. *mili candana berndī rahi, goraim mukha na lakhāi |*  
*jyom jyom mada lālī carhai, tyaurm tyaurm ugharati jāi ||*

What her messenger said to him

She's so fair, lad,  
that her forehead's  
white sandalwood paste mark  
can't be spotted!  
But it stands out clearly

when her face is flushed  
with wine.\*

503. *durati na kuca bica kañcukī, cuparī sādī seta |*  
*kabī ānkanu ke aratha laum, pragaṭa dikhāī deta ||*

What her companion told him

Her blossoming breasts  
can be seen now  
beneath her plain white  
perfumed bodice  
but by peering eyes alone,  
as the abstruse meaning  
of a poem  
is revealed only by  
close study!\*

504. *rahī ju tana chabī basan mili, baranī sakairī su na baina |*  
*āṅga op āṅgī durī, āṅgī āṅga durai na ||*

What her messenger told him

Words can't describe  
the splendour of her limbs  
clothed in a dress  
of shade perfectly matching  
her complexion;  
so much so  
that despite her bodice  
her breasts seem bare!

505. *sonajuhī sī jagamagai, aṅga aṅga jobana joti |*  
*suraṅga kusūmbhī kañcukī, duraṅga deha-duti hoti ||*

What her confidante said to him

Her bodice  
red as *kusuma* flowers



seems to take on a dual hue  
when seen  
against her youthful limbs  
glistening  
like yellow jasmine.\*

506. *apane kara guhi āp haṭhi, hiya pahirāi lāl |*  
*naula sirī aurai cathī, maulasirī kī māla ||*

What one of her companions said to another  
The garland of *maulasirī* flowers  
he threaded himself  
and urged her  
to put round her neck  
has made that lovely girl  
look lovelier still.\*

507. *sohat aṅguṭhā paikai, anavaṭa jaryau jarāi |*  
*jītyau tarivana duti su ḍhari, paryau tarani manu pāi ||*

What her companion said to him  
Her gem-studded toe-ring  
shines so brilliantly  
that it seems  
the sun  
humbled by the splendour  
of her ear ornament  
had fallen at her feet!\*

508. *jaṅgha jugala loin nire, kare manau bidhi maina |*  
*keli-taruna dukhadaina ye, keli taruna sukhadaina ||*

What her companion said to him  
It seems Creator Kāma  
fashioned her thighs  
from the essence of pure beauty—

from the essence of pure beauty—  
 thighs which outvie  
 the plantain tree trunk  
 and give her lover  
 great pleasure  
 in love-making.\*

509. *nava nāgari tana muluka lahi, jobana āmira jaura |*  
*ghaṭi bathi tairi bathi ghaṭi rakam, kariri aura ki aura ||*

What her messenger said to him

Youth holds sway  
 over her body  
 transforming it wholly,  
 swelling out some parts  
 slenderizing others,  
 like a rapacious official  
 dispossessing the disfavoured  
 of their wealth  
 to enrich his favourites!

510. *barai kahāvat āpa sauri, garuvai gopinātha |*  
*tau badihauri jau rākhiau, hāthana mana lakhi hātha ||*

What her messenger said

You're so sure of yourself  
 Kṛṣṇa,  
 but let me see  
 if you can stay calm  
 when once you've seen  
 her lovely hands!

511. *tana bhūṣana añjana dṛgana, pagani mahāvara raṅga |*  
*nahiri sobhā kauri sājiyata, kahibai hiri kauri aṅga ||*

What her companion said to him

her adornments,  
when her body  
is brighter than her jewellery,  
her eyes blacker  
than lamp-black  
and her feet redder  
than lacquer dye!

512. *pahulā hāra hiyaiṁ lasat, sana ki berndī bhāla |*  
*rākhati khet kharī kharī, khare urojani bāla ||*

What he said to his friend

Her bosom resplendent  
with a garland of lilies,  
a hemp flower dangling  
from her braid  
upon her forehead,  
and her taut breasts  
jutting out;  
that charming village girl  
stands  
looking after her field.\*

513. *bhāvaka umaraunhauri bhayau, kacuka paryau bharu āi |*  
*sīpa harā kairi mīsa hiyau, nisadina herat jāi ||*

What her messenger told him

Her blossoming youth  
has made her breasts heavy;  
on the pretext  
of looking at her string of shells  
she keeps glancing at them  
often now.

514. *sūra uditahūṁ mudita mana, mukha sukhamā kī or |*  
*citai rahat cahum or taini, nihacala cakhanu cakor ||*

What her companion told him

Even though it's day  
the cakors,  
seeing her lovely face,  
think it's the moon come out  
and keep gazing at it  
raptly!\*

515. *tū rahi sakhi hauri hiri lakhau, cāhi na aṭā bali bāla |*  
*saba hī binu sasi hī udai, daihairi araghu akāla ||*

What her companion said

Dear girl,  
do not climb the balcony  
I implore you;  
I'll go instead  
and find out if the moon's up;  
for if the other women see your face  
they'll think it's the moon  
and break their fast  
untimely!\*

516. *diyau araghu nīcai calau, saṅkaṭa bhānairi jāi |*  
*sucitī hvai aurau sabai, sasihiri bilokau āi ||*

What her companion said to her

You've made your moon-oblation  
dear girl,  
now let's come down  
and end the pangs of hunger  
or other fasting women  
who're gazing on your face

will be perplexed to see two moons  
and go on fasting!\*

517. *lalit syāma lilā lalan bathau cibuka chabi dūna |*  
*madhu chākyau madhukara paryau, manau gulāba prasūna ||*

What her companion told him

The round black tattoo mark on her chin  
makes it doubly charming.  
It's as though a black bee  
drunk with nectar  
were lolling on a rose.

518. *sabai suhayē lagai, basaiṁ suhāiṁ thāma |*  
*goraiṁ muniha beṁdi lasat, aruna pīta sīta syāma ||*

All things look charming  
at the right place,  
as on a fair woman's brow  
her red turmeric  
yellow saffron and  
black musk  
marks.\*

519. *tiya tithi taruna kisorabaya, punyakāla sama dauna |*  
*kāhūṁ punyana paiyat, bāisa saṁdhi saṁkrauna ||*

What her companion said

Her childhood's  
blending into youth  
as the auspicious passing  
of the sun  
from one zodiac sign  
to another.  
Now's the time, clever lad,  
to seek her love.\*

520. *mānahu munha dikharāvanī, dulaḥini kari anurāga |*  
*sāsu sadan mana lalana hūn, sautina diḡau suhāga ||*

What one of her companions said to another

The beautiful newly-wed wife  
charmed everybody  
and got  
as though gifts at her face-seeing ceremony,  
from her mother-in-law  
the right of being the lady of the house,  
from her co-wives  
precedence in conjugal love,  
and from her husband  
his heart's surrender.\*

521. *kana debo saun̐pyau sasura, bahū thurahathī jāni |*  
*rūpa rahacataim lagi lagyau, saba jaga māṁgana āni ||*

What an observer said

That frugal man  
asked his daughter-in-law  
having small hands  
to distribute charity,  
hoping thereby  
to seem bountiful  
yet give less.  
But thirsting to see the girl's beauty  
it seemed as though the whole world  
came begging  
at his door!

522. *saghan kuṁj ghana ghanatimira, adhika am̐dherī rāti |*  
*taū na durihai syāma vaha, dīpasikhā sī jāti ||*

What her messenger said to Kṛṣṇa

The darkness of the woods

is increased by the black clouds  
hovering overhead,  
the night too is pitch dark;  
just the opportunity for her  
to hasten to you, Kṛṣṇa;  
but alas,  
her flame-like body  
will be a giveaway!

523. *jarī kori gore badan, baṛhī kharī chabi dekha |  
lasatī manau bijurī kiye, sārada sasi paribekha ||*

What her messenger told him

The gold-embroidered border  
of her sari  
framing her fair face  
makes it shine  
with redoubled splendour,  
like an orb of lighting  
round the full moon  
of the śarada night.\*

524. *ihī dvaihm motī sugath, tū nath garabi nisāmka |  
jihi pahire jagadṛga grasatī, lasatī haṁsatī sī nāmka ||*

What he said about her nose ornament

Darling girl  
you're rightly proud of  
your nose-ring  
with its twin pearls,  
for it so enhances  
the beauty of your comely nose  
that all men glance on it  
spellbound.

525. *sakhi sohati gopāla kaim, ur guñjana kī mālā |*  
*bāhari lasati manau piye, dāvānala kī jvāla ||*

What she said to her confidante

Dear friend,  
the *guñjana* garland  
resplendent on Kṛṣṇa's bosom  
is as though  
the flames of the forest fire  
swallowed by him  
had burst out!\*

526. *ur na tarai nīmda na parai, harai na kāla bipāka |*  
*chinaka chāki uchakai na phiri, khare viṣama chabi chāka ||*

What her companion said

Beauty's intoxication is strong,  
even a little of it  
makes one drunk;  
fear does not drive it out  
nor sleep pacify it,  
it does not wear away with time;  
its inebriation  
is everlasting.

527. *bhūṣana bhāru saṁbhārihai, kyaunī ihim tana sukumāra |*  
*sūdhe pāi na dhara parat, sobhā hī kaim bhāra ||*

What her companion said

Ornaments, dear girl,  
are surely an encumbrance  
for your delicate limbs,  
when even the burden  
of your own beauty  
makes you totter!\*



528. *cunari syāma satāra nabha, murṇha sasi kī unahāri |*  
*neha dabavata nīṇḍa laum, nirakhi nisā sī nāri ||*

What he said to her friend

Within her black apparel  
tucked with silvery stars  
her face,  
like the moon  
in the night sky,  
overpowers me  
with love's slumber.

529. *kahat sabai berṇḍi diyain, āṇka dasaguno hot |*  
*tiya līlāra berṇḍi diyain, aṇita bathat udot ||*

What he said to his friend

Everyone knows  
that a zero  
makes a figure  
ten times more;  
but there's no bound  
to the increase in her beauty  
when she puts  
a round mark  
on her brow!

530. *dekhat sonajuhī phirati, sonajuhī se aṅga |*  
*duti lapāṇa paṭa seta hū, karat banauṭī raṅga ||*

What her companion said

Do you see that girl, dear lad,  
wandering amid the jasmine flowers  
in her garden?  
The splendour of her limbs  
matching their blossoming yellowness

makes her white sari  
seem to take on a yellowish hue.

531. *diṭhi na parat samāna duti, kanaka kanaka-serṇ gāta |*  
*bhūṣana kara karakasa lagat, parasa pichāne jāta ||*

What her messenger told him

Her gold ornaments  
blend so well  
with her golden complexion  
that one can know she wears them  
only by feeling  
their hardness!

532. *karat malina āchi chabihiri, harat su sahaja vikāsa |*  
*aṅgarāga aṅgana lagai, jyom āraṣi usāsa ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Her body's natural sheen  
is dimmed  
instead of taking on brilliance  
by the scented *aṅgarāga* paste  
she put on;  
as a mirror  
blurred  
by breathing deeply on it.\*

533. *pahiri na bhūṣana kanaka ke, kahi āvat ihiri heta |*  
*darpana ke se morace, deha dikhāi deta ||*

What her companion said

Listen to me, dear girl,  
wear no gold ornaments  
for on your body  
they're as rust  
on a mirror!\*

534. *gorī chigunī nakh aruna, chalā syāma chabi dei |*  
*lahat mukati rati palaka yaha, nain tribenī sei ||*

What he said to his confidant

Even a glimpse  
of her fair little finger  
with rosy nail,  
resplendent with a black ring  
set with sapphire,  
enraptures my soul;  
as though  
it had got salvation  
by looking on Trivenī!\*

535. *sahaja seta pacatoriyā, pahirati ati duti hoti |*  
*jalacādara ke dīpa laurī, jagamagāti tana joti ||*

What her messenger said to him

From under her plain white  
gossamer sari  
her body's brilliance  
shines out  
as oil lamps glimmering  
behind a thin water spray.\*

536. *lagat subhaga sītala kirana, nisi dina sukha avagāhi |*  
*māha sasi bhrama sūra tyaurī, rahat cakorī cāhi ||*

In the *Māgh* month  
the daylight is so dim  
that the *cakor*  
gleefully thinks it's night  
and mistaking the sun for the moon  
keeps staring at it rapturously!\*

537. *likhana baiṭhi jākī sabī, gahi gahi garaba garūra |*  
*bhaye na kete jagata ke, catura citere kūra ||*

What her companion said to him

Who's the vain artist  
who has not essayed  
to paint her elusive beauty,  
and failing  
given up in despair?\*

538. *pīṭhi diye hīm naika muri, kari ghūṁghaṭ paṭa ṭāri |*  
*bhari gulāl kī mūṭhi saurṁ, gaī mūṭhi sī mari ||*

What he told his confidant

Without glancing at me  
she slightly turned  
and lifting her veil  
showered on me  
a fistful of *gulāl*,  
leaving me bound  
in the spell of her enchantment.\*

539. *jyaurṁ jyaurṁ paṭa jhaṭakati haṭhati, harṁsati nacāvati nai*  
*tyaurṁ tyaurṁ nipaṭa udārahūrṁ, phaguvā deta banai na ||*

What one of her companions said to another

As she tugged at his dress  
smiling with coquettish glances  
insisting on her gifts  
for playing *phāga*;  
though large-hearted  
he kept putting her off  
to savour her charm  
a little longer!\*

540. *bhāla lāl berndi diyairi, chuṭe bāra chabi deta |*  
*gahyau rāhu ati āhu kari, manu sasi sūra sameta ||*

What her companion said to him

Her scattered tresses  
and the round red beauty mark  
upon her brow  
look so fascinating  
that it seems as though Rāhu  
had courageously challenged  
the sun as well as the moon  
and swallowed both of them!\*

541. *kañcana tana dhana baran bar, rahyau raṅga mili raṅga |*  
*jānī jāti subāsa hīn, kesari lāgī aṅga ||*

What her messenger told him

The saffron paste  
she has applied  
blends so perfectly  
with her superb golden complexion  
that one can know it's there  
only by its fragrance!

542. *hvai kapūramanimaya rahi, mili tana duti mukatāli |*  
*china china khari bicacchanau, lakhati chvāi tinu āli ||*

What her companion said to him

The pearls in her necklace  
reflecting the splendour  
of her golden complexion  
seem so like *kapūramani*  
that her puzzled friend  
keeps testing them again and again  
with a piece of straw!\*

543. *dhani yaha dvaija jahāma lakhyau, tajyau dṛgana dukha daṇḍa |*  
*tuma bhāgani pūraba uyau, aho apūraba caṇḍa ||*

What her companion told her

Dear girl I went  
on the balcony  
to see the moon  
of the second night  
of the lunar month's bright half,  
when I chanced  
by your good fortune  
on the moon of your lover's face  
wonderfully aloft in the east  
which will gratify your eyes  
and dispel your sorrows.\*

544. *ranita bhr̥ṅga ghaṇṭāvali, jharata dāna madhu nīru |*  
*maṇḍa maṇḍa āvata calau, kuñjaru kuñja samīru ||*

Spring comes  
with the hum of black bees  
melodious as the jingle  
of bells stringed  
round an elephant's neck,  
and flowers dropping nectar  
as ichor oozing  
from the temples  
of elephants in rut.

545. *rahi rukī kyaumhūm su cali, ādhika rāti padhāri |*  
*harata tāpa sab dyaus kau, ur lagi yāri bahāri ||*

'That loved one' he said,  
'who was quiescent all day,  
came at midnight  
and caressing my breast  
dispelled all my grief.'

‘Your sweetheart?’ his friend asked,  
‘Ah no!’ he lied, ‘the breeze!’\*

546. *cuvata sveda makaraṇḍa kana, taru taru tara biramāi |*  
*āvata dacchina deśa taim, thakyaum baṭohī bāi ||*

Like a tired  
perspiring traveller  
resting in the shade,  
pausing under trees,  
comes  
the southern wind  
laden  
with the nectar  
spilled  
from flowers.

547. *lapaṭi puhupa parāga paṭa, sanī sveda makaraṇḍa |*  
*āvata nāri navaurha laum, sukhad vāyu gati maṇḍa ||*

The pleasing breeze comes gently  
swathed in the pollen of flowers  
bathed with their nectar,  
like a newly-wed bride  
with faltering steps  
tired and perspiring,  
bashfully covering  
her limbs.

548. *lāl tumhāre rūpa kī, kahau rīti yaha kauna |*  
*jāsaum lāgat palak dīga, lāgat palak palau na ||*

What her companion said  
What a spell  
have you cast on her  
handsome!  
If she glances at you

just once  
she keeps staring and staring  
and how can the poor girl  
sleep?

549. *calata lalit śrama sveda kana, kalit aruna mukha tairṇ na |*  
*bana bihāra thāki taruni, khare thakāye nain ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Exhausted  
from wandering in the woods  
with her lover,  
the flushed face  
of that young girl  
glistening with beads of perspiration  
looks so captivating  
that though his eyes tire  
with gazing  
he cannot take them off her  
even for a moment!

550. *mānahu bidhi tana accha chabi, swaccha rākhibairṇ kāja |*  
*dr̥ga-paga pochana kaum kiye, bhūsana pāyandāja ||*

What her companion said to him

To preserve her body's brightness  
it seems god has fashioned  
her ornaments  
as a doormat  
to wipe the feet  
of Eyes which glance at her!



551. *aruna baran tarunI carana, aṅguri ati sukumāra |*  
*cuvati suraṅga raṅga manau, capi bichiyana kaim bhāra ||*

What her companion said to him

This is not the rosinness  
of her tender feet, dear lad,  
it seems to me  
it's the lacquer dye  
being squeezed out  
by the weight  
of her toe ornament!\*

552. *mora mukuta kI caṇḍrakani, yaum rājat narīdananda |*  
*manu sasisekhara kI akasa, kiya sata sekharā caṇḍa ||*

What his woman messenger said to her

The spots of colour  
on Kṛṣṇa's crown of peacock feathers  
flame so brilliantly, dear girl,  
that it seems he were  
jealous Kāma  
who, to outvie Śiva,  
had decked his head  
with a hundred moons!\*

553. *adhara dharat hari kaim parat, oṭha dīṭhi paṭa joti |*  
*harita bāmsa kI bāmsurI, indradhanuṣa raṅga hoti ||*

What her companion said to her

The gleam  
of Kṛṣṇa's  
red lips  
yellow dress and  
dark eyes,  
falling

on his green bamboo flute  
gives it the colourful radiance  
of a rainbow.

554. *khari lasati goraim garaim, dharisati pān kī pika |  
manau gulubam̐dha lāl kī, lāl lāl duti-likā ||*

What her messenger said to him

Her throat is so fair, dear lad,  
that the betel-juice she swallows  
gives it a rosy tinge,  
which makes it look  
as though it was decked with  
her neck ornament  
and its string of rubies!

555. *kuṭila alaka chuṭi parat mukha, bathigau itau udot |  
baṅka bakārī deta jyaun̐, dāma rupaiyā hot ||*

What her messenger said to him

The curly lock  
lying on her face  
enhances her splendour  
as greatly  
as an oblique mark  
turning a mere *daṁṭī*  
into a rupee.\*

556. *gate bare chabi-chāka chaki, chinguri-chora chuṭaim̐ na |  
rahe suraṅga raṅga raṅga uḥīṁ, naha-do mehm̐dī nain ||*

What he said to her

My eyes are so drunk  
with the splendour  
of your little finger's tip  
reddened with henna dye

that they can't tear themselves away  
even for a moment.  
It seems, dear girl,  
they too have been coloured  
with its hue!

557. *gārhe thārhe kucana thili, piya hiya ko thaharāi |*  
*ukasaumairi hiri tau hiyairi, sabai dai ukasai ||*

What her companion said to her

Your hard budding breasts  
pushing against your lover's bosom  
have already made him forget  
all your co-wives.  
What havoc  
they'll play with them  
when they fully blossom!

558. *rahi latu havi lai hauri, lakhi vaha bala anupa |*  
*kitau mithasa dyau dai, itau salono rupa ||*

What her woman messenger said to him

Heavens!  
How much beauty  
has god given her!  
Even I am bewitched by it  
dear lad,  
how much more  
you!

559. *தாகი ধৌ ধোবতি, ঢাকিলি মুখা-জৌ |*  
*লাসা রসৌ কৈরি বাগা, জাগা-মাগা দুটি হৌ ||*

What one of her companions said to another

Wearing a sari  
come straight from the wash

when that girl  
of radiant face  
moves about  
working outside her kitchen,  
the whole veranda  
in which she sits  
seems to blaze  
with her splendour!

560. *sohati dhoti seta mairi, kanaka barana tana bala |*  
*sarada barada bijuri, bha rada kijata lal ||*

What her messenger told him

When she drapes  
her golden-hued body  
in a white sari  
dear lad,  
her splendour  
puts to shame  
the flash of lightning  
in autumnal clouds!

561. *chale paribe kairi darana, sakai na hatha chuvai |*  
*jhahakata hiyairi gulaba kairi, jhamva jhamvaiyata pai ||*

What her companion said to him

Her feet are so tender  
that the barber's wife  
can't touch them  
for fear of causing blisters!  
And even when she rubs them clean  
with roses for a brush  
she does it  
with a faltering heart!

562. *aruna saroruha-kara-carana, dṛga khañjana mukhā caṇḍa |  
samaī āi sundari sarada, kāhi na karati anaṇḍa ||*

As autumn comes  
bringing joy,  
that moon-faced girl  
of lotus-like hands and feet  
and eyes as *khañjana* bird's,  
captivates everyone  
wherever she goes.\*

563. *paga paga maga agamana parat, carana aruna duti jhūli |  
ṭhaura ṭhaura lakhiyat uṭhe, dupahariyā se phūli ||*

What her messenger said to him

Her ruby feet  
seem to shed  
red dust  
as she goes along,  
as though  
a *dupahariyā* flower  
had blossomed  
at each step she takes!\*

564. *chinaka chabile lāl vaha, nahim jau laga batarāti |  
ūkha mayūkha piyūkha kī, tau lagi bhūkha na jāti ||*

What her messenger said to him

Her voice is so sweet  
handsome lad,  
that if you hear it  
even for a moment  
you'll consider  
the sweetness  
of sugarcane  
honey and

nectar  
of no account!\*

565. *kahā kumuda kaha kaumudī, kitika āraśī joti |*  
*jāki ūjarāi lakhaim, ānikhi ūjarī hoti ||*

What her companion said to him

The brilliance of her body  
dazzles the eyes.  
What is the mirror's gleam,  
moonlight's glimmer  
or the lustre of the white lily  
before it?

566. *lahalahāti tana taru nai, laci laga laum lafi jāye |*  
*lagaim lāmka loin bharī, loin leti lagāye ||*

What he said to her companion

The spellbound eyes  
of those who glance  
at her slender waist  
bending with the burden of youth,  
remain glued to it  
as birds  
stuck fast in birdlime!

567. *chapyau chabilau mumha khasai, nilaim āncara cira |*  
*manau kalānidhi jhalamalai, kālindī kaim nira ||*

What her companion said to him

The glimmer of her face  
from within her blue sari's end  
vies with the shimmering moon  
reflected in the waters  
of the Yamunā.\*

568. *to lakhi mo mana jo lahi, so gati kahi na jāti |*  
*thori-gāra gatyau taū, uryau rahai dina rāti ||*

What he said to her

How should I relate  
the strange condition  
of my mind  
dear girl,  
though imprisoned  
in your chin's charming dimple  
it still keeps flying  
on the wings of its loveliness!

569. *to tana avadhi anūpa, rūpa lagyau sab jagat kau |*  
*mo dṛga lāge rūpa, dṛgani lagī ati catapati ||*

What he said to her

Your body  
is the ultimate in perfection  
dear girl.  
It seems the Creator  
has exhausted  
all the world's beauty  
in fashioning it!  
My fascinated eyes  
remain ever restless  
to behold you.

570. *chuṭe chuṭāvat jagat tairi, saṭakāre sukumāra |*  
*manu bāṛidhat beni bāṛidhe, nila chabīle bāra ||*

What he said to her messenger

When she binds  
her long black glossy hair  
whose heart does she not bind  
with its loveliness?

And when she loosens it  
whose enraptured mind  
is not lost  
to the world?

571. *camacamāta cancala nayana, bica ghūṁghaṭa paṭa jhīna |*  
*manahu sūra saritā vimala, jala ucharata juga mīna ||*

What her messenger said to him

The sparkle  
of her tremulous eyes  
beneath her gossamer veil  
is as the glint  
of fishes leaping aslant  
in the limpid Gaṅgā waters.

572. *chipaiṁ chapākara chiti chayau, tama sasihari na saṁbhāri |*  
*haṁsati haṁsati cali sasimukhī, mukha taiṁ āṁcaru ṭāri ||*

What the messenger accompanying the girl going to meet her

lover said

Though we're only halfway  
and the moon has gone down  
wrapping the earth  
in the cloak of darkness,  
fear not, my beauty,  
go along happily beaming  
for if you just remove your veil  
our path will be lit up  
by the moon of your face  
and the flashes of your smiles!



573. *phiri ghara kauri nūtan pathik, cale cakita cita bhāgi |*  
*phūlyau dekhi palāsa bana, samujhi samujhi davāgi ||*

When the inexperienced wayfarers  
saw the *palāsa* blossoms  
a blaze of red,  
they mistook them  
for a forest fire  
and fled back home!\*

574. *bāla chabli tiyana mairi, baiṭhi āp chipāi |*  
*aragaṭahūm yānūsa si, paragata hoi lakhāi ||*

What her companion said

When she sits  
in the assembly of young women  
her face outshines  
those of all others;  
its ravishing radiance  
glows from beneath her veil  
like the flame  
in a chandelier.

575. *orīṭha ucai hāmsi bhari, dṛga bhaumhana ki cāla |*  
*mo mana kahā na pi liyau, piyat tamākū lāl ||*

What she told her confidante

The dear lad  
bewitched me  
when moving his eyebrows seductively  
and twinkling with delight  
he raised his lips  
to smoke his *hookah*.\*

576. *pācaram̐ga ram̐ga berindī kharī, uthe ūgi mukha joti |*  
*pahirair̐m cira cinautiyā, caṭaka caugunī hoti ||*

What her messenger said to him

Her forehead ornament  
set with gems of five colours  
adds to the dazzle  
of her face,  
and when she wears  
her colourful wrap  
it shines with redoubled brilliance.

577. *vāraur̐m bali to dr̐gana par, ali khañjana mr̐ga mīna |*  
*ādhi dīṭhi citauni jihim, kiye lāl ādhina ||*

What her companion said to her

Upon my word, dear girl,  
your ravishing eyes  
dark as black bees  
put to shame  
those of the fish  
the deer  
and the wagtail,  
for they can bewitch your lover  
with just one glance!\*

578. *jāt sayāna ayāna hvai, vai ṭhaga kāhi ṭhagaim na |*  
*ko lalacāi na lāl ke, lakhi lalacauhair̐m nain ||*

What she said to her companion

How can I help  
looking at him, friend?  
His eyes are like cheats  
tricking away  
all prudence.

Who can remain unmoved  
by their bewitching glance?

579. *jyaurn kara tyaurñ cikuṭi calati, jyaurn cikuṭi tyaurñ nāri |  
chabi saurn gatī sī lai calati, cātura kātanihāri ||*

What he said about the woman at the spinning wheel

One hand of hers  
skilfully turns the wheel  
with lightning swiftness,  
the other nimbly  
pushes along the yarn,  
while her neck  
moves up and down  
in unison.  
Her rhythmic motions  
are more like those  
of a graceful dancer  
than of a woman spinning!

580. *budhi anumāna pramāna śruti, kiyerñ nīṭhi ṭhaharāi |  
sūchima kati para brahma ki, alakha lakhī nahirñ jāi ||*

What he said to her messenger

As Brahma's existence is known  
by persistent reasoning  
and by the testimony  
of the scriptures,  
so people gather  
she must have a waist  
between her upper and  
lower limbs,  
and because they hear  
she has one;  
but none  
has really seen it!\*

581. *lagī analagī sī ju bidhi, kari khari kaṭi khīna |*  
*kiye manau vehīn kasari, kuca nitamba ati pīna ||*

What her companion said to him

Brahmā has made her waist  
so exceedingly slender  
that though she has it  
it seems it's not there at all!  
And to make up for its slimness  
he has filled out  
her hips and breasts!\*

582. *muṛṇḥa pakḥāri muṛaharu bhijai, sīsa sajala kara chvāi |*  
*mauru ucai ghūṭena taim, nāri sarovara nhāi ||*

What he said to his confidant when he saw her bathing

See that charming girl  
with uplifted head  
squatting on the pond's edge  
to bathe.  
She scoops water  
with her hand  
souses her head  
and washes her face,  
wetting the hanging border  
of her sari.\*

583. *phiri phiri daurata dekhiyat, nīcale naimka rahaim na |*  
*ye kajarāre kauna par, karat kajākī nain ||*

What her companion said

Never at rest,  
your glance  
keeps straying each moment.  
Say, dear girl,  
whose equanimity

are these collyrium-filled  
bandit-like eyes of yours  
about to plunder?

584. *lase murāsā tiya sravana, yaum mukatā duti pāi |  
mānahu parasā kapol kaim, rahe sveda-kana chāi ||*

What her companion said to him

There are not pearls, dear lad,  
with which her ear ornament is set,  
it seems  
thrilled by brushing her cheeks  
it's exuding  
beads of perspiration!\*

585. *mili parachāmhīm jonha maim, rahe duhuna ke gāt |  
hari rādhā ik saṅga hīm, cale galī mahīm jāt ||*

What one of Rādhā's companions said to another

Is this a wonder I see  
dear friend?  
Both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa  
in the moonlight-streaked lane,  
two, but seeming one;  
her golden-hued form  
merging with the moonlight,  
his dark one  
with the night's blackness!\*

586. *berndī bhāla tambola mukha, sīsa silasile bāra |  
dṛga ānje rājai kharī, sājaim sahaja simgāra ||*

What her companion said to her

What need have you  
of ornate adornments?  
You look charming as it is,

your brow marked  
with just a *bindī*  
your lips stained  
with red betel-juice,  
your eyes darkened  
with lamp-black  
and your hair glistening  
with perfumed oil.\*

587. *aṅga aṅga pratibimba pari, darpana se sab gāt |*  
*duhare tihare cauhare, bhūṣana jāne jāt ||*

What her messenger said to him

Her brilliant limbs  
are like so many mirrors  
reflecting  
her ornaments  
twofold  
threefold and  
even fourfold!

588. *mohirṁ bharosau rijhihai, ujhaki jhāmki ik bāra |*  
*rūpa rijhāvanahāru vaha, ye nainā rijhavāra ||*

What her companion said to her

Stand on tiptoe, dear girl,  
and glance just once at him  
from your window,  
I'm sure you'll be captivated  
for you are a worshipper of beauty  
and he's Prince Charming!

589. *barajai dūnt haṭh cathai, na sakucai na sakāi |*  
*tūṭati kaṭi dumaci macaki, lacaki lacaki baci jāi ||*

What her messenger told him

She does not heed  
her companions  
but swings on  
more vigorously  
neither fearing  
to fall off  
nor ashamed  
of her dress billowing out  
leaving her limbs bare.  
When she works the swing  
to and fro  
her tender waist bends so alarmingly  
that it seems  
it's about to break!

590. *kara sameṭa kaca bhuja ulaṭi, khaye sisa paṭa ḍāri |*  
*kākau mana bāmdhe na yaha, jūrau bāmdhani hāri ||*

What one of her admirers said

Gathering her tresses  
in her hands  
her arms upturned,  
her mantle dropping  
from her head to her shoulders,  
whose heart does she not bind  
when she binds her hair?

591. *sohat oṭhai pīta paṭa, syāma salone gāt |*  
*manau nilamani saila par, ātapa paryau prabhāt ||*

What her companion said

Enveloped in a yellow mantle

dark Kṛṣṇa's handsome body  
glinting with splendour  
seems like the peak  
of a sapphire hill  
flashing  
in the morning sun.

592. *bhāla lāl berndī lalan, ākhat rahe birāji |*  
*īndukalā kuja maim dūrī, manau rāhu bhaya bhāji ||*

What her messenger told him

When she painted  
a crimson mark  
over the sanctified rice grains  
put on by the temple priest,  
it seemed, dear lad,  
as though the moon  
had, out of Rāhu's fear,  
parted with its lustre  
and hid it in the orbit  
of blood-red Mars!\*

593. *aṅga aṅga chabi kī lapāṭa, upaṭati jāti acheha |*  
*kharī pātariū taū, lagai bharī sī deha ||*

What her messenger said to him

The brilliance  
of her lovely limbs  
increases day by day,  
making her slim body  
swell out  
in all its fullness.



594. *biharṁsati sakucati sī hiyai, kuca āṁcara bica bāṁha |  
bhijai paṭa taṭa ko cali, nhāi sarovara māṁha ||*

What he told his confidant

After bathing in the pond  
she went laughing  
towards the bank  
her wet garments clinging to her,  
shyly cupping her hands  
under her revealing  
sari end.

595. *barana bāsa sukumāratā, sab bidhi rahi samāi |  
pāṁkhuri lagī gulāba kī, gāla na jānī jāi ||*

What her companion said to him

Her pinkish cheek  
is so tender  
and fragrant  
that the rose petal  
which got stuck to it  
could not be distinguished!\*

596. *rañca na lakhiyata pahiri yauri, kañcana se tana bāla |  
kumhilāne jānī paratī, ur campe kī māla ||*

What her companion said

How perfectly  
the yellow *campā* garland  
blends  
with your golden hue  
dear girl!  
It can be seen  
only when its flowers  
fade!\*

597. *ahe dahemī jina dharai, jina tū lehi utāri |*  
*nikai hai chīmkai chavaī, aisaihi rahi nāri ||*

What he said to her

How charming you look  
when you raise your arms  
to put the butter pot  
in the sling net!  
Don't place it  
nor yet take it down,  
just stay as you are  
dear girl,  
that I may gaze and gaze  
at your bewitching beauty!\*

598. *gori gadakārau parai, haṁsati kapolana gāra |*  
*kaisi lasati gaṁvāri iha, sunakirabā ki āra ||*

What he said when he saw the village girl

How gorgeous looks  
that smiling rustic belle  
with dimpled cheeks  
and a flashing  
*sunakirā's* wing  
stuck obliquely  
on her forehead!\*

## WISDOM

599. *sītalatā aru subāsa ki, ghaṭai na mahimā mūra |*  
*pīnasavāraim̐ jyom̐ tajyau, sorā jāni kapūra ||*

Camphor does not lose  
its coolness and fragrance  
merely because a man  
diseased by *pīnasa*,  
who has lost his sense of smell,  
can't tell it from  
saltpetre.\*

600. *tantrīnāda kabitta rasa, sarasa rāga rati raṅga |*  
*anabūte būte, tīre, je būte saba aṅga ||*

Those who dive deep  
in the ocean of  
haunting music and song,  
poignant poetry  
and rapturous love-making,  
are not drowned;  
it's they who are sunk  
who keep away!

601. *jeṭi sampati kṛpana kaim̐, teṭi sūmati jora |*  
*baṛhat jāta jyom̐ jyom̐ uraja, tyaur̐ tyaur̐ hota kaṭhora ||*

The greater  
a miser's wealth  
the stingier he is,  
as the more  
a girl's breasts grow

the harder  
they become!

602. *sampati kesa sudesā nara, namat duhuni ik bāni |*  
*vibhava satara kuca nīca nara, narama vibhava ki hāni ||*

As a girl's hair  
softening and  
cascading down  
the more it grows,  
the wealthier  
a virtuous man is  
the gentler and lowlier  
he becomes.  
But as her breasts which,  
rising proud and hard,  
soon turn flabby,  
is the vile man,  
arrogant when in power and  
humbled when shorn of it.

603. *kaisairi choṭe narana tairi, hota batana kai kāma |*  
*maṭhyau damāmau jāta kyori, kahi cūhe kai cāma ||*

Of what use  
can the small fry be  
to people  
of importance?  
Can a rat's skin  
make a mount  
for the face  
of a kettledrum?

604. *ghara ghara dolat dina hvai, jana jana jâcata jâi |*  
*diyaim lobha-casamâ cakhani, laghu hûm batau lakhâi ||*

Feigning poverty  
the avaricious man  
wears the glasses of greed  
which make even paupers  
seem rich to him!  
Thus he wanders  
from house to house  
shamelessly  
begging.

605. *batē na hūjata gunana bina, birada batāi pāi |*  
*kahat dhatûre saun kanaka, gahanau gathyau na jâi ||*

Greatness is attained  
by noble qualities  
not by empty praise,  
as *dhatûrâ* bears  
the name of gold  
but ornaments  
can't be made from it.\*

606. *kanaka kanaka taim saugunau, mādakatâ adhikâi |*  
*uhim khâyaim baurâta hai, ihm pâyaim baurâi ||*

The intoxication  
of *dhatûrâ*  
is only for a while,  
but that of gold  
is a hundred times greater,  
for it turns one's head  
and lasts for ever.\*

607. *saṅgati sumati na pāvahīm, pare kumati kairi dhaṇḍh.  
rākhau meli kapūra mairi, hīṅga na hota sugaṇḍha ||*

Even good company  
cannot make  
the wicked  
virtuous,  
as asafoetida  
does not turn fragrant  
though kept long  
with camphor.

608. *jāta jāta bita hota hai, jyaumi jiya mairi santoṣu |  
hota hota tyauri hoi tau, hoi gharī marhi moṣu ||*

If one could be content  
with his gains  
just as he's reconciled  
to his losses,  
he could achieve salvation  
in a moment.\*

609. *pāi taruni kuca ucca pada, cīramai thagyau saba gāuri |  
chuṭairi thauru rahihai vahai, ju ho mola chabi nāuri ||*

As village folk  
prizing a *ghurighaci* garland  
on the uprising breasts  
of a woman,  
which discarded  
is a mere trifle;  
so is a worthless man  
given a high place  
when he's on it  
no longer.\*

610. *jina dina dekhe ve kusuma, gai so bita bahāra |*  
*ab ali rahī gulāba mairī, apat karṇṭhīlī dāra ||*

Spring has gone  
O black bee,  
taking away  
its perfumed roses!  
All that's left now  
are the branches  
bare and thorny.

611. *sabai hamsat karatāri dai, nāgaratā kai nāmva |*  
*gayau garaba guna ko sabai, base gām̐vāre gām̐va ||*

What the town-dweller said

These ignorant village people  
clap their hands and laugh  
deriding my knowledge.  
My stay in this village  
has cured me  
of the vanity of wisdom!

612. *bahaki barāī āpanī, kat rāṁcatī mati-bhūla |*  
*bina madhu madhukara kai hiyai, garai na guṛahara phūla ||*

Foolish man  
why are you conceited  
by empty adulation,  
as a nectarless *guṛahala* flower  
ignored by the black bee  
yet blossoming out  
with haughty redness?\*

613. *saṅgati doṣa lagai sabana, kahe ju sārñce baina |*  
*kuṭila baṅka bhru saṅga bhaye, kuṭila baṅka gati nain ||*

Crooked things  
 go together  
 in truth;  
 it is from under  
 arched eyebrows  
 that girls send  
 sidelong glances!

614. *na ye bisasiye lakhi naye, durjana dusaha subhāi |*  
*ārñṭaim pari pānanu harata, kārñṭaim laurñ lagi pāi ||*

Never trust a vile man  
 however meek he seems,  
 for whenever he gets the chance  
 he'll be like a thorn in the feet  
 and be after  
 your very life!

615. *gahilī garaba na kījiye, samai sohāgahim pāi |*  
*jīya kī jīvani jeṭh jo, mārñha na chārñha sohāi ||*

What her companion said  
 O foolish woman  
 don't be conceited  
 with your youth.  
 You please your husband now  
 but when you're no longer young  
 you'll not;  
 as the shade  
 which is pleasant in summer's *Jeṭh*  
 is vexatious  
 in wintry *Māgh*.\*



616. *nara ki aru nala nira ki, gati ekai kari joi |  
jètau nīcau hvai calai, tetau ūmcau hoi ||*

It's humility  
which makes a man noble,  
as the lower a fountain  
the higher  
its water spouts.

617. *bathat bathat sampati salilu, mana saroju bathi jai |  
ghaṭat ghaṭat su na phiri ghaṭai, baru samūla kumhilai ||*

The more a lake fills with water  
the longer the lotus stem grows,  
but when it's dry  
it does not shorten  
and shrivelling up  
dies.

So desires increase  
with a man's wealth  
but do not get less  
when it wanes,  
even though he's ruined.\*

618. *kori jatana kou karo, parai na prakṛtihiṁ bica |  
nala bala jala ūnce carhairi, tau nica ko nica ||*

One may try a million ways  
but he can't change his nature  
as water flowing low  
rises in the pipe,  
but pouring out  
flows low again.

619. *gunī gunī sabakairi kahairi, nigunī gunī na hota |*  
*sunyau kahūri taru araka tairi, araka samāna udota ||*

An ignorant man  
 does not become learned  
 merely because  
 everyone calls him so.  
 The *madāra* tree  
 is known as 'arka'  
 and so's the sun  
 but whoever saw it shine  
 with the sun's light?\*

620. *dusaha durāja prajāna kauri, kyauri na bathai dukha daṇḍa |*  
*adhika andherau jaga karat, mili māvasa rabi caṇḍa ||*

Why should not  
 sorrows unbearably increase  
 in the kingdom  
 where two kings reign  
 at the same time?  
 Is not the darkness greatest  
 when the sun and the moon  
 are in the same House  
 on *amāvasya*?\*

621. *pyāse dupahara jeth ke, phire sabai jala sodhi |*  
*marudhara pāi matiruhiri, mārū kahat payodhi ||*

Searching in vain  
 for water to drink  
 in the hot *Jeth* noons  
 of barren *Mārwaṛa*  
 if one chances on  
 even a watermelon  
 he's as happy

as though he has found  
the ocean!\*

622. *viṣam vṛṣādita kī tṛṣā, jiye matīrana sodhi ।  
amita apāra agādha jala, māraurṇ mūṭha payodhi ॥*

Watermelons  
keep the people of Mārwaṭa alive  
by allaying their burning thirst  
in summer;  
of what use  
would the salty ocean be to them  
even with its endless expanse  
of unfathomable water?

623. *jagama jaladhi pānīpa bīmala, bhau jaga ādha apāru ।  
rahe guṇī hvai gara paryau, bhalaiṁ na mukatāharu ॥*

One who is gifted  
and of noble birth,  
when dishonoured  
is like the lustrous costly pearl  
taken out from the immeasurable ocean  
only to be stringed  
into a paltry necklace.

624. *gahai na nekau guṇa garaba, harṇsai sabai saṁsāra ।  
luca ucapada lālaca rahai, garaiṁ paraiṁhūṁ hāra ॥*

The greed of high office  
makes one stick to it  
even though slighted,  
as a necklace proudly lies  
on a woman's swelling breasts  
braving scornful glances.\*

625. *basai burāi jāsu tana, tāhi ko sanamāna |  
khalau bhalau kahi choriyai, khoṭaim graha japu dāna ||*

The wicked man is honoured  
the righteous ignored,  
as when their stars are good  
men do not bother,  
but when vexed by evil ones  
they pray and give charity.

626. *jau cāhat caṭaka na ghaṭai, mailo hoi na mitta |  
raja rājasu na chuvāi tau, neha cikanauṁ citta ||*

If you desire, friend,  
your love-smeared mind  
not to lose  
its pristine radiance,  
do not let the dust  
of vice  
settle on it.\*

627. *ati agādha ati autharau, nadī kūpa sara bāi |  
so tāko sāgara jahān, jāki pyāsa bujhāi ||*

River, well, pond or tank,  
even if shallow  
is like the sea for one  
whose thirst it can slake.  
So what counts is help  
whether it comes from those in power  
or from the powerless.

628. *tau aneka auguna bharahim, cāhai yāhi balāi |  
jau pati samptihūn binā, jadupati rākhem jāi ||*

If I can get esteem  
by Kṛṣṇa's grace

and wealth  
which is not tainted with evil,  
why should I needlessly hanker  
after money?\*

629. *kahai yahai śruti subhratyau, yahai sayāne loga |*  
*tina dabāvat nisakahī, pātak rājā roga ||*

There are three agencies  
which crush the weak,  
so say the wise  
and the scriptures too.  
Kings oppress them  
diseases afflict them  
and, exploiting their misery,  
sins assail them.\*

630. *jo sira dhari mahimā mahī, lahiyata rājā rāi |*  
*pragaṭata jaratā āpanī, mukuṭa su pahirata pāi ||*

One who scorns  
a person of high repute  
only reveals  
his folly;  
he's like a king or chieftain  
who wears his diadem  
on his feet!

631. *ko kahi sakai baṭena saurī, lakhairī baṭi hū bhūla |*  
*dīne dāī gulāba ko, ina dārana ve phūla ||*

A great man's faults  
are overlooked.  
No one blames  
god the almighty  
for placing the lovely rose  
on a thorny branch!

632. *samai samai sundara sabai, rūpa kurūpa na koi |*  
*mana ki ruci jetī jītai, tītī tītai ruci hoi ||*

Nothing is beautiful or ugly  
in itself,  
beauty lies  
in the beholder's eye.  
The more a thing attracts  
the lovelier it seems.

633. *dina dasa ādara paikai, kara lai āpu bakhāna |*  
*jau laurī kāga sarādhapakha, tau lagi tau sanamāna ||*

Pompous man,  
bragging  
about the homage paid  
to you  
for a short while,  
you're like the wretched crow  
to whom  
people toss a morsel  
in the *śrādhā* fortnight!\*

634. *marata pyāsa piñjarā paro, suvā dinana ke phera |*  
*ādara dai dai boliyata, bāyasa bali ki bera ||*

There are times  
when an honoured person  
is disgraced  
and one despised  
esteemed;  
as in the *śrādhā* fortnight  
the prized parrot  
lies in his cage  
languishing with thirst,  
while the miserable crow

is coaxed  
to accept the offering!\*

635. *ihī āsa aṭakau rahata, ali gulāba kairi mūla |*  
*havaiahairi pheri basaṇta ṛta, in dārana ve phūla ||*

Even when the rose tree is bare  
the nectar-sucking black bee  
hovers round its roots  
in the hope  
that spring will return  
bringing back its roses.\*

636. *ve na ihāma nāgara bathi, jina ādara to āba |*  
*phūlyau unaphūlyau bhayau, gavaṇai gāṇva gulāba ||*

Who can be aware  
of your virtues  
in this village of ignoramuses?  
Friend, you're like a rose tree  
nurtured by an outsider  
and left here  
uncared for.

637. *calyau jāi hyām ko karai, hāthina ko vyapāra |*  
*nahiri jānata ihiri pura basairi, dhobi oṛa kumhāra ||*

Try your trading talents  
elsewhere friend,  
who'll buy your elephants here?  
Don't you know  
only washermen,  
labourers and  
potters  
live in this wretched town,  
and their need is  
donkeys?\*

638. *pāila pāi lagi rahai, lage amolika lāl |*  
*bhoḍarahūm ki bhasihai, berndī bhāmini-bhāl ||*

A vile man  
however ostentatious  
is despised,  
one eminent  
though simple  
extolled;  
as a woman's anklet  
is set with priceless gems  
yet its place is  
on her feet,  
while the plain talc mark  
proudly adorns her brow.

639. *mūtha cathāyai hūm rahai, paryau pīṭhi kaca bhāru |*  
*rahai garaim pari rākhiyai, taū hiyaim par hāru ||*

However much he's honoured  
an unworthy person  
can't rise,  
while one who has merit  
prosper;  
as tresses  
even though brushed up  
fall down the back,  
while the garland  
round the neck  
proudly lies on the bosom.

640. *ik bhijaim cahalaim paraim, būrain bahaim hajāra |*  
*kitai na auguna jaga karaim, bai-nai cathatī bāra ||*

As thousands are drowned  
or swept away  
by a river in flood



and others trapped in swamps  
or drenched;  
so some are soured  
with youth's enjoyment  
some trapped in its bonds  
and for many  
it is the speedy way  
to perdition.

641. *nahim pāvasa r̥turāja yaha, taji taravara cita bhūla |*  
*apatu bhayaim bina pāihai, kyom nava dala phala phūla ||*

As in spring  
a tree must shed  
its old leaves  
to get new ones,  
a man has to forsake  
his self-respect  
to win the favour  
of kings.

642. *mīta na nīti galita hvai, jo dhariyai dhana jora |*  
*khayaim kharacaim jau jurai, tau joriyai karora ||*

Advice by a man to his miserly friend

You shouldn't starve  
to hoard wealth;  
your savings, friend,  
even if they are in millions  
ought to be  
what remains  
after spending  
on food and necessities.

643. *nica hiyaiṁ hulase rahaiṁ, gahe gernda ko pota |*  
*jete māthe māriyata, tete ūnce hota ||*

Effront  
elates a vile man  
all the more,  
as the harder  
one throws a ball,  
the higher  
it rises.

644. *burau burāi jau tajai, taurṁ cita kharau ḍarāta |*  
*jyaurn nilaṅka mayanṅka lakhi, ganaiṁ loka utapātā ||*

It's the spotless moon  
which presages disaster.  
Just so  
the wicked man  
who forsakes evil  
is to be feared all the more  
for one can never know  
what new mischief  
he's scheming!\*

645. *oche bate na hvai sakaiṁ, lagyau satara hvai gaina |*  
*diragh hohiṁ na naimkahuṁ, phāri nihāre nain ||*

A shallow-minded person  
can never achieve greatness  
even though, in his vanity,  
he thinks he can reach the sky;  
as however wide open  
the eyes may be  
they do not, because of that,  
become any larger.

646. *paṭa pāṁkhai bhakha kārṁkarai, sapara parei saṅga |*  
*sukhi parevā puhumi maim, ekai tuhi bihaṅga ||*

To be contented  
one must bridle his desires—  
simple food,  
plain clothes  
and one wife  
to share his pleasures.  
See the homely pigeon  
whose raiments are his feathers  
grit his fare  
and who's happy  
with just his mate.

647. *are parekhau ko karai, tuhirṁ biloki bicāri |*  
*kahirṁ nara kahirṁ sara rākhiyaiṁ, kharaiṁ bathaiṁ paripāri ||*

Why probe, O mind,  
into that  
which is plain as day?  
Where's the pond  
which does not overflow its banks  
when flooded,  
and who's the man  
who, with surfeit of wealth,  
will not break  
the bounds of righteousness?

648. *kara lai sūṁghi sarahi ke, rahe sabai gahi mauna |*  
*gandhi andha gulaba kau, gairṁvai gāhaka kauna ||*

How can you expect  
these stupid people  
to prize your virtues?  
You're like a foolish perfumer  
whose rare rose scent

the country bumpkins  
rub on their hands and smell  
and also praise,  
but do not buy!

649. *bhāvira anabhāvira bhare, karau koṭi bakavāda |*  
*apani apani bhāṁti kau, chuṭai na sahaja savāda ||*

Whether it pleases people  
or annoys them  
or is denounced  
in a million ways;  
a man's nature  
does not change.\*

650. *caṭaka na chāmrata ghaṭatahūṁ, sajjana neha gambhīra |*  
*phīkau parai na baru phaṭai, raṁgyau cola raṁga cīra ||*

The deep friendship  
of a good and faithful friend  
remains constant  
even in adversity,  
as cloth  
coloured with the *cola* wood dye  
may tear  
but will not fade.\*

651. *ko chūṭyau ihiṁ jāla pari, kat kuraṅga akulāta |*  
*jyaum jyaum surajhi bhajyau cahat, tyaum tyaum arujhati jāta ||*

Who's not caught  
in the meshes of worldly existence?  
The more he tries  
to free himself from them  
the more he's entangled,  
like a deer  
struggling in a net.

652. *moracandrikā syāma sira, cat̥hi kat dharatī gumān |*  
*lakhivī paina par lūṭhatī, suniyata rādhā mām ||*

What Rādhā's companion said

O peacock feather,  
you're puffed up with vanity  
because you adorn  
Kṛṣṇa's head;  
but soon you'll be trampled  
underfoot,  
for Rādhā is sulking  
and Kṛṣṇa will appease her  
by falling at her feet!\*

653. *godhana tū hāraṣyau hiyaim, gharīka lehi pujāi |*  
*samujhi paraigī sīsa par, parata pasuna ke pāi ||*

A man's conceit  
at the undeserved honour  
given to him  
can last  
only a little while,  
as the cow-dung *godhana*  
worshipped one moment  
and the next  
left to be crushed  
underfoot  
by beasts.\*

## DEVOTION

654. *meri bhavabādhā harau, rādhā nāgari soi |*  
*jā tana ki jhāim paraim, syāma harita duti hoi ||*

The poet's prayer to Rādhā

Gifted Rādhā,  
even a glimpse of you  
delights Kṛṣṇa;  
dispel  
my worldly sorrows  
I pray you.\*

655. *nikaim dai anākaṇi, phiki pari guhāri |*  
*tajyau manau tārana-birada, bāraka bārana tāri ||*

A devotee's complaint

My prayer  
does not move you  
O lord.  
You once saved an elephant  
who invoked your help,  
thereafter  
it seems you have ceased  
redeeming your devotees!\*

656. *ajauri tarauna hi rahyau, śruti sevat ik raṅga |*  
*nāka-bāsa besari lahyau, basi mukutana kairi saṅga ||*

In haughty isolation  
a woman's ear ornament  
adorns the humble ear

but her nose-ring  
conjoining with pearls  
proudly glitters on the nose;  
even so, deliverance  
is not obtained  
by one, who all by himself  
keeps reciting the *Vedas*:  
but even the vilest soul  
gets heaven  
by association with god-knowers.\*

657. *jama-kari munha tarihari paryau, ihm dharihari cita lāva |*  
*viṣaya tṛṣā parihari ajauṁ, narahari ke guna gāva ||*

Knowing for certain  
you always lie  
beneath the Yama-shaped elephant's mouth,  
leave off sensual desires  
this very moment  
and sing the praises  
of Lord Nṛsiṅha.\*

658. *kauna bhāmti rahihai birada, ab dekhibi murāri |*  
*bīdhe mosauṁ ānikai, gīdhe gīdhaim tārī ||*

What a devotee said

It is now to be seen  
O Kṛṣṇa,  
how you will keep your reputation  
as a saviour;  
it was easy to redeem  
vultures  
like Jaṭāyu,  
but now you are faced with  
the vilest of sinners!\*

559. *jagata janāyau jihim sakala, so hari jānyau nāmhī |*  
*jyaum āmkhina jaga dekhiyai, amkhi na dekhī jāmhī ||*

The entire world  
is revealed to you by god  
yet him  
you do not see;  
as the eyes  
which gaze on all things  
cannot gaze  
on themselves.

660. *diragha sāmsa na lehu dukha, sukha sāim nahim bhūli |*  
*daī daī kyaum karata hai, daī daī su kabūli ||*

Sigh not in your sorrow  
nor forget god in your joy.  
Why do you lament  
'O god, O god'?  
Accept cheerfully  
what he has given you.

661. *bandhu bhaye kā dīna ke, ko taryau raghurāi |*  
*tūthe tūthe phirata hau, jhūthe birada kahāi ||*

What a devotee said

O Rāma,  
you go about elated  
pretending to befriend  
the distressed!  
Whose grief have you ever removed,  
whom have you emancipated?  
When you cannot help even me  
lowliest of the low,  
how shall I know you  
as a redeemer?\*



662. *thoraiṁ hī guna riḡhate, basarāi vaha bāni |*  
*tumahūṁ kānha manau bhaye, āja kāliha ke dāni ||*

What a devotee said

O Kṛṣṇa,  
you used to be won over  
by even a little goodness;  
but now it seems  
like the reluctant philanthropists  
of our days  
you are hard to please!

663. *kaba ko ṭerata dīna raṭa, hota na syāma sahāi |*  
*tumahūṁ lāgi jagata guru, jaga nāyaka jaga bāi ||*

What a devotee said

Kṛṣṇa,  
master of the world  
supreme guide;  
I have been calling on you  
plaintively  
for long,  
yet you do not favour me.  
Has the callousness  
of the people of the world  
entered you too?

664. *diyau su śiśa cāhai lai, āchi bhānti aeri |*  
*jāpaiṁ sukha cāhata liyau, tāke dukhahīṁ na pheri ||*

Be resigned  
to the grief god gives you  
and accept it  
cheerfully;  
when you desire  
happiness from him,

grudge not your share  
of sorrows.\*

665. *koū korik sangrahau, koū lākh hazāra |*  
*mo sampatti jadupati sadā, bipati bidāranahāra ||*

What a devotee said

Some people collect  
crores of rupees  
some lakhs  
some thousands.  
My only wealth  
is Kṛṣṇa,  
destroyer of sorrows.

666. *pragaṭa bhaye dvijarāja kula, subasa base braja āi |*  
*mere harau kalesa saba, kesava kesavarāi ||*

What a devotee said

Born in the Candra clan  
O Kṛṣṇa,  
you chose Braja  
to live in.  
Be a father to me  
I beseech you  
and remove  
my sorrows.\*

667. *japamālā chāpā tilak, sarai na ekau kāma |*  
*kāmcai mṇana mācaini bṛthā, sāmcai rāmcai rāma ||*

Nothing is gained  
by an impious man  
engrossed in worldly things  
though he may say the rosary  
and paint his limbs

with holy marks;  
for god is pleased  
only by true devotion.\*

668. *mohani mūrati syāma kī, ati adbhuta gati joi |  
basati sucita antara taū, pratibimbita jaga hoi ||*

What a Kṛṣṇa devotee said

See how marvellous  
is Kṛṣṇa's image:  
though enshrined  
only within the pure heart,  
it's reflected  
all over the world!

669. *mairi samujhyau niradhāra, yaha jaga kārīko kārīca sau |  
ekai rūpa apāra, pratibimbita lakhiyata jahān ||*

The world is surely false,  
only the One Reality  
exists as a mirror  
reflecting  
all shapes and forms.\*

670. *taji ūratha hari rādhikā, tana duti kari anurāga |  
jihim braja keli nikunja maga, paga paga hota prayāga ||*

One who's steeped  
in the love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa  
need not go on pilgrimages,  
for in the woods of Braja  
where dark Kṛṣṇa  
twined round fair Rādhā  
as though the silvery Gaṅgā  
had joined the blue Yamunā,  
each step  
has the sanctity of Prayāga.\*

671. *kijai cita soi tare, jina patitana ke sāth |  
mere guna auguna ganana, ganau na gopināth ||*

A devotee's prayer to Kṛṣṇa

Weigh not my faults  
against my virtues  
Kṛṣṇa,  
but even as you've given salvation,  
to countless fallen souls  
forgiving their sins,  
redeem me too.

672. *nita prati ekat hīn rahat, baisa barana mana eka |  
cahiyata jugalakisora lakhi, locana jugala aneka ||*

What a Kṛṣṇa devotee said

Of the same name,  
age and thinking,  
Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa  
are eternally united.  
Wonderful  
is their celestial beauty,  
beyond the reach  
of human eyes.\*

673. *hari kijati binati yahai, tumaauri bāra hajāra |  
jihim tihim bhānti daryau rahyau, paryau rahaum darabāra ||*

What a Kṛṣṇa devotee said

O Hari,  
this is my only prayer to you  
a thousand times over—  
let me anyhow remain  
in your divine presence.\*

674. *mohūṁ dijai moṣu, jyauriṁ aneka adhamanu diyau ।  
jau bāṁdhairiṁ hī toṣu, tau bāṁdhau apanairiṁ gunanu ॥*

A devotee's prayer

Liberate me lord  
even as you've liberated  
many sinners.  
Release me from the bonds  
of worldly existence:  
and if it pleases you  
to keep me bound,  
bind me with the rope  
of your devotion.\*

675. *sisā mukuṭa kaṭi kāchini, kara murali ur māla ।  
ihim bānaka mo mana basau, sadā bihārīlal ॥*

A devotee's prayer

May your divine form  
with a crown of peacock feathers,  
girdle on waist,  
flute in hand  
and on your bosom  
a *vaijayantī* garland,  
ever dwell in my heart  
O Kṛṣṇa.\*

676. *tau laga yā mana sadan mairi, hari āvahirī kihi bāṭa ।  
bikaṭa jāte jau laga nipaṭa, khuṭairiṁ na kapāṭa kapāṭa ॥*

How can the mind's mansion  
become god's abode  
while its gateway  
remains barred  
by the strong portals  
of deceit?

677. *bhājana kahyau tātaiṁ bhajyau, bhajyau na ekau bāra |*  
*dūri bhājana jātaiṁ kahyau, so taiṁ bhajyau gaṁvāra ||*

O foolish mind,  
you shunned that god  
whom you were told to worship,  
you did not pray to him  
even once,  
instead you adored  
worldly things  
you were asked to renounce.

678. *patavāri mālā pakari, aur na kachū upāu |*  
*tari saṁsāra payodhi kauri, hari nāvaiṁ ko nāu ||*

God's name is the boat, friend,  
your rosary its rudder  
which will steer you across  
the ocean of this world.  
There is no other way  
to salvation.

679. *yaha biriyā nahin aur ki, tū kariyā vaha sodhi |*  
*pāhana nāva cathāi jihin, kīne pāra payodhi ||*

What a devotee of Rāma said

You can find salvation now  
only by seeking Rāma  
by whose grace  
a bridge of floating stones was made  
to span the ocean  
and take his army across.\*

680. *karau kubat jaga kuṭilatā, tajaurṇ na dinadayāl |  
dukḥi hohuge saral hiya, basat tribhaṅgi lāl ||*

What a Kṛṣṇa devotee said

I'll bear the world's reproach  
but I'll not abandon  
my crookedness, Kṛṣṇa,  
for then, with your askew form  
of triple undulations,  
you'd have trouble  
dwelling  
in my straight heart!\*

681. *nija karanī sakucehīṁ kat, sakucāvat ihīṁ cāla |  
mohūrṇ se nīta bimukha saurṇ, sanamukha rahi gopāla ||*

What a Kṛṣṇa devotee said

I'm myself repenting, Kṛṣṇa,  
I have never been devoted to you,  
why do you add to my embarrassment  
by still being gracious to me?

682. *mohīṁ tumahīṁ bārhi bahasi, ko jīte jadurāja |  
apanaiṁ apanaiṁ birada kī, duhūrṇ nibāhana lāja ||*

What a Kṛṣṇa devotee said

Both you and I, Kṛṣṇa,  
are struggling  
to keep our reputation,  
you as a redeemer  
of sinners like me,  
and I of the fallen  
by showing you'll redeem us!

683. *dūri bhajata prabhu pīṭhi dai, guna bistārana kāla |*  
*pragaṭata nirguna nikṣaṭa hvai, caṅga raṅga bhūpāla ||*

God turns away  
from the arrogant  
but is drawn  
towards the meek,  
as a kite soars higher  
the more string it's given  
and comes closer  
when pulled.\*

684. *jākaiṁ ekāekahūṁ, jaga byausāi na koi |*  
*so nidāgha phūlai phalai, āka ḍahaḍaho hoi ||*

As it is only  
the untended  
swallow wort plant  
which remains green  
and bears fruits and flowers  
in the exacting summer—  
so god cares  
for the man who's helpless.

685. *laṭuvā laurṁ prabhu kara gahaiṁ, nigunī guna lapaṭāi |*  
*vahai gunī kara tairṁ chuṭairṁ, nigunīpaim hvai jāi ||*

As when a spinner  
holds his top  
it has the string wrapped round it  
and when he flings it on the ground  
it's stringless;  
one who has god's grace  
has all virtues  
even though virtueless,  
and one who hasn't



is wretched  
despite all good qualities.

686. *pralaya karan barasana lage, juri jaladhara ik sātha |*  
*surapati garaba haryau haraṣi, giradhara giri dhari hātha ||*

When the assemblage of clouds  
began to pour  
by Indra's command  
as though they would cause  
the world's dissolution,  
Kṛṣṇa lifted the Goverdhana mount  
on his hands  
and destroyed  
Indra's arrogance.\*

687. *brajabāsina kau ucita dhana, jo dhana rucita na koi |*  
*su cita na āyau sucitaI, kahau kahāṁ taim hoi ||*

What a Kṛṣṇa devotee said  
to a worldly-minded Braja-dweller  
How can your mind  
be tranquil  
without Kṛṣṇa's love  
which the unfortunate  
do not prize,  
but which  
for Braja-dwellers  
is all the wealth they have.\*

688. *apanaim apanaim mata lage, bādi macāvata sora |*  
*jyaurṁ tyaurṁ sabakaurṁ seibau, ekai nandakisora ||*

What a Kṛṣṇa devotee said  
Votaries of diverse faiths  
needlessly wrangle,

for in his own way  
each is worshipping  
Kṛṣṇa  
the supreme god.

689. *tau baliyai bhaliyai banī, nāgara nandakisora |  
jau tuma nikairī kai lakhyau, mo karanī kī ora ||*

What a Kṛṣṇa devotee said

Much good will it do me  
benign Kṛṣṇa,  
if you look at my deeds  
minutely!  
Be gracious to me, I beseech you,  
without sifting  
the good from the bad.

690. *manamohana saurī moha kari, tū ghanasyāma nihārī |  
kuñjabihārī saurī bihari, giradhārī ur dhārī ||*

O mind,  
adore Kṛṣṇa  
who steals all hearts,  
meditate on his form  
dark as a cloud,  
linger with him where he sports  
with the milkmaids in the woods,  
and get your strength  
from the saviour of Braja  
who held aloft  
the Goverdhana mount.\*

691. *samai palaṭi palaṭai prakṛta, ko na tajai nija cāla |*  
*bhau akaruna karunākarau, ihiṁ kapūta kalikāla ||*

A devotee's complaint

Whose nature does not change  
with time?  
Even god,  
who is the ocean of mercy  
has turned heartless  
in this Kali age!\*

692. *jyauri hvai haum tyauri houriṅgau, haum hari apani cāla |*  
*haṭha na karau ati kaṭhina hai, mo tāribau gopāla ||*

What a Kṛṣṇa devotee said

Suffering punishment  
for my evil deeds  
I'll remain accursed  
O Kṛṣṇa,  
do not persist  
in redeeming me,  
for all your efforts  
will be in vain!

## IN PRAISE OF JAYASINGHA

693. *rahati na rana jayāsahi mukha, lākhi lākhana ki fauja |*  
*jānci nirākharahū calai, lai lākhana ki mauja ||*

As soon as you took the field  
valorous Jayasingha,  
Lākhana's troops  
fled in awe.  
And who can match  
your generosity?  
Even fools  
are rewarded  
lakhs of rupees  
on the mere asking!\*

694. *calata pāi nigunī gunī, dhana mani muktā mālā |*  
*bherṁṭa hota jayasāha saurṁ, bhāgya cāhiyata bhāla ||*

Scholar  
or blockhead,  
everyone,  
gets as gifts from Jayasingha  
gold or gems  
or a string of pearls,  
if only he's lucky enough  
to meet him.

695. *pratibimbita jayasāhi-duti, dipati darapana-dhāma |*  
*saba jaga jītaṇa kaum̐ karyau, kāma-byūhu manu kāma ||*

The splendour  
of Jayasiṅgha  
reflected  
in the hall of mirrors  
is as though  
Kāma had arrayed his army  
to vanquish the world.\*

696. *ani baṭi umati lakhauṁ, asi bāhaka bhata bhūta |*  
*maṅgala kari mānyau hiyaiṁ, bho muṁha maṅgala rūpa ||*

Seeing  
the valiant sword-bearing kings  
in the army  
arrayed for battle,  
Jayasiṅgha  
considered it an honour  
to oppose them,  
and his face  
flushing an angry red  
seemed like ruddy Mars.\*

697. *svāratha sukṛta na srama br̥thā, dekhi bihaṅga bicāri |*  
*bāja parāyaiṁ pāni pari, tūṁ pañchīhi na māri ||*

O Jayasiṅgha,  
in vain you fight  
your Rājput brothers  
to add to Shāh Jahān's domain  
reaping yourself  
no advantage or merit,  
as though a hawk  
would prey upon innocent birds  
to feed others.\*

698. *sāmāṁ sena sayāna ki, sabai sāhi kairṁ sāth |*  
*bāhubalī jayasāhijū, fatai tihāre hāth ||*

Though Shāh Jahān  
is a skilled warrior  
and has all the weapons of war,  
without you  
O mighty Jayasingha  
how can he achieve  
victory?\*

699. *yaum dala kāthe balaka tairṁ, tai jayasingha bhuvāla |*  
*udara adhāsura kairṁ parairṁ, jyau hari gāi guvāla ||*

'Twas you  
Maharaja Jayasingha  
who rescued  
Shāh Jahān's army  
beseiged in the Balkh country  
as valiantly  
as Kṛṣṇa,  
ripping open the belly  
of the demon, Adhāsura,  
freed  
the cowherds and their cows.\*

700. *ghara ghara turakini hīndunī, deti asīsa sarāhi |*  
*patina rākhi cādara curī, tairṁ rākhi jayasāhi ||*

You brought back alive  
from Balkh  
both Hindu and Muslim soldiers;  
their wives  
sing your praises  
Jayasingha,  
from house to house

for having saved them  
from cruel widowhood.\*

701. *hukum paī jayasāhī kâu, hari rādhikā prasāda |*  
*karī bihārī satasāī, bhārī aneka savāda ||*

At the command of Jayasingha  
and blessed  
with the grace  
of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa  
I, Bihārī  
composed the *Satasāī*  
to cater  
to diverse tastes and fancies.\*

## MISCELLANEOUS

702. *āvata jāta na jāniye, tejahim taji siyarāna |*  
*gharahim janivāi laum ghaṭyau, kharo pūs dinamāna ||*

As the short days  
of the *Pūs* month  
denuded of warmth  
and hardly noticed,  
is the welcome made  
to the man  
who stays with his in-laws!\*

703. *giri tairi ūmce rasika mana, būte jahām hajāra |*  
*uhai sadā pasu narana kau, prema payodhi pagāra ||*

To the connoisseurs  
with minds more elevated  
than the highest mountains,  
love and beauty  
are an ocean unfathomed  
even after a thousand dives;  
but to ignorant fools  
they seem to be  
a shallow ditch  
easily crossed.

704. *rahi na saki sab jagata mairi, sisir sīta kairi trāsa |*  
*garama bhāji garhavi gai, tiya kuca acala mavāsa ||*

Scared by winter's cold  
when warmth  
could not find a place



in all the world,  
it fled for refuge  
to the firm impregnable breasts  
of women!

705. *jhūthe jāni na saṅgrahe, mana munha nikase baina |*  
*yāhi tairi mānahu kiye, bātana kauri bidhi nain ||*

The spoken words  
are often false  
and do not reveal  
what's in the mind.  
That's why it seems  
god has given eyes  
to unmistakably reveal  
what's in it.

706. *yā bhava pārāvāra kauri, ularighi pāra ko jāi |*  
*tiya-chabi-chāyāgrāhinī, grahati bica hiri ai ||*

Where is the man  
who can get across  
the ocean of worldly existence  
when woman, the temptress,  
lies in wait  
ever ready  
to pounce upon him?\*

707. *bahu dhana lai ahasāna kari, pārau deta sarāhi |*  
*baida-badhū hamsi bheda sauri, rahi nāha-munha cāhi ||*

What a physician's friend said to his acquaintance

When that impotent physician  
took a large fee  
from a patient  
and gave him mercury ash  
to cure him of impotence too,

the doctor's wife  
stared at her husband  
amazed,  
and gave him a sly smile!

708. *kahalāne ekat basat, ahi mayūra mṛga bāgha |*  
*jagata tapobana sau kiyau, dīragha dāgha nidāgha ||*

Agitated  
by the sizzling heat,  
serpent and peacock  
gazelle and lion  
have taken refuge together,  
as though summer has turned  
their forced resting place  
into a sanctuary!\*

709. *jyaurn jyaurn bathati bibhāvari, tyaurṁ tyaurṁ baṛhat ananta |*  
*oka oka sab loka sukha, koka soka hemaṁta ||*

The lengthening winter nights  
bring immeasurable joy  
to every couple,  
but to the ruddy geese pair  
they give  
boundless grief.\*

710. *nāgari bibidha bilāsa taji, baṣī gavamlina māmhi |*  
*mūṛhani maim ganabī ki tūṁ, hūṭhyau dai iṭhalārṁhi ||*

Gifted girl,  
forsaking the comforts of the city  
you've settled  
in this backward village;  
if you do not put on airs  
as the women here do  
they'll think you stupid!\*

711. *cita pitumāraka joga guni, bhayau bhayairiṃ suta sogā |*  
*ati hulasyau jiya joisī, samujhairiṃ jārāja joga ||*

When the astrologer  
read his newborn son's horoscope  
he was grieved  
it heralded the father's death,  
but on deeper scrutiny  
he was overjoyed to learn  
the child was fathered  
by his wife's lover!\*

712. *anīyāre dīragha dṛgana, kiṭī na taruni samāna |*  
*vaha citavani aurai kachū, jihirī basa hota sujāna ||*

Countless young women  
are endowed  
with large and pointed eyes,  
but the glance that can enslave  
men of virtue  
is given only to some.\*

713. *dṛga thirakaumhairiṃ adhakhule, deha thakaumhairiṃ dhāra |*  
*surati sukhīt sī dekhiyat, dukhīt garabha kairiṃ bhāra ||*

What one of her companions said to another  
When the old woman  
who came to meet her  
saw her tired and weary-eyed,  
she said  
'Maybe she has been love-making  
and is still intoxicated  
with its rapture,

*Miscellaneous*

that's why perhaps  
she has sent you to receive me  
instead of coming out herself.'  
'Ah no' I said, 'you're mistaken,  
she's heavy with a child  
and it's that which makes her listless.'



# NOTES

## *Abbreviations Used*

- AL W.G. Archer, *The Loves of Krishna*, London: George Allen & Unwin Limited, 1957.
- AR *The Ananga Ranga of Kalyana Malla* (Trans. Sir Richard Burton and F.F. Arbuthnot), London: William Kimber and Company Limited, 1963.
- BAH Mulk Raj Anand and Krishna Hutheesingh, *The Bride's Book of Beauty*, Bombay: Kutub Publishers Limited.
- BBB *Bihāri Bhāṣya* (Commentary, Dr Desarājasingha Bhātī), Delhi: Aśoka Prakāśan, 1978. (Hindi)
- BBL *Bihāri-Bodhini* (Commentary, Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna 'Dīna'), Banāras: Sāhitya-Sevā-Sadan, 1978. (Hindi)
- BBP Dr Śakuntalā Pāncāla, *Bihāri kī Bhāṣa*, Kānpur, Sāhitya Ratnālaya, 1979. (Hindi)
- BSL *Bihāri-Satasai (lālacandrikā tīkā)* (Commentary and Editing, Lallūji 'Lāl'), Kāśī: Nāgarīpracārīṇī Sabhā. (Hindi)
- BSR *Bihāri-Satasai* (Commentary, Śrī Rākeśa), Lucknow: Prakāśana Kendra. (Hindi)
- BSS *Bigāri-Satasai* (Commentary, Śarmā, Devendra 'Indra'), Agra: Vinod Pustak Mandir, 1978. (Hindi)
- GBS *Bihāri-Satasai* (Commentary, Śukla, Girijādatta), 1934. (Hindi)
- HWB Benjamin Walker, *Hindu World*, 2 vols., London: George Allen & Unwin Limited, 1968.
- KS *Vatsyayana's Kama Sutra* (Trans., Sir Richard Burton and F.F. Arbuthnot) London: Luxor Press, 1963.
- SPI *Sanskrit Poetry* (Trans. Ingalls, Daniel H.H.), Cambridge and Massachusetts: Havard University Press, 1965.

## Introduction

### *Bihārī's Times*

1. *Voyages to the East Indies* (trans., Willcocke), vol. 1, p. 415.
2. Abu'l Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbarī*, vol. 3, p. 256.
3. *Tazuk-i-Jahangīrī* (trans., Rogers & Bereridge), vol. 2, p. 268.
4. Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, vol. 2, pp. 13–14; vol. 3, pp. 267–8.
5. *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 342.
6. For example the *Bṛhat-kausala Khaṇḍa* (cantos ix–xv) depicted Rāma as performing the *rāsallīlā* dance with heavenly nymphs and human princesses, even after he married Sītā.

### *Life*

1. The version followed here is based generally on the one accepted by Jagannātha Dāsa Ratnākara, *Bihārī's* celebrated commentator.
2. George A. Grierson, *Indian Lyric Poetry and Bihārī-Satasai*, in *Bihārī, an Anthology*, ed., Dr Nagendra, Delhi: Bansal & Co., 1981, p. 56.
3. Lallūji 'Lāl' (*Bihārī-Satasai, lālacandrikā ukā*, commentary and editing by Lallūji 'Lāl', Kāśī: Nāgarīpracārīnī Sabhā, p. 8, Hindi), thinks it was not the Amber ruler who was *Bihārī's* patron, but Jayasingha Sawāi (1693–1743). But the mention of the Balkh campaign in verse 699 could refer only to Jayasingha, the Amber rajah.

### *The Rītikāla Tradition and Love in Bihārī's Poetry*

1. A detailed account has been given in *Bihārī-Satasai* (Commentary, Devendra Śarmā, 'Indra'), Agra: Vinod Pustak Mandir, 1978, pp. 103–119. (Hindi)
2. *Satasai* (text), verse 126 (Note—All verses of the *Satasai* quoted are from this translation. The numbers are those of the text.)
3. *Satasai*, verse 600.
4. *ibid.*, 640.
5. *ibid.*, 703.
6. Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine*, II.v.1.
7. *Satasai*, verse 705.
8. *ibid.*, 145.
9. *ibid.*, 489.
10. *ibid.*, 180.
11. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, I.i.234.

12. *Satasai*, verse 373.
13. *ibid.*, 632.
14. K.K. Śarmā, *Bihārī: Philosophy of Life* (in *Bihārī, an Anthology*, ed. Dr Nagendra, Delhi: Bansal & Co., 1981, p. 171).
15. *Satasai*, verse 194.
16. Sir Walter Scott, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, ii.10.

*The Concept of Beauty in Bihārī's Poetry*

1. *Satasai*, verse 509.
2. *ibid.*, 550.
3. *ibid.*, 503.
4. *ibid.*, 487.
5. *ibid.*, 470.
6. *ibid.*, 580. See also verse 581.
7. *ibid.*, 566.
8. *ibid.*, 561.
9. *ibid.*, 478.
10. *ibid.*, 583.
11. *ibid.*, 592.
12. *ibid.*, 556.
13. *ibid.*, 494, 498, 501, 524 and 584.
14. *ibid.*, 533. See also verses 527 and 586.
15. *ibid.*, 462, 463, 464, 485, 496 and 513.
16. *ibid.*, 499, 176, 582 and 594.
17. *ibid.*, 202.
18. *ibid.*, 135 and 177.
19. *ibid.*, 538.
20. *ibid.*, 245.
21. *ibid.*, 41.
22. *ibid.*, 502.
23. *ibid.*, 466, 4, 468, 479, 482, 483, 21, 492, 508, 64, 541, 551, 563 and 596.
24. *ibid.*, 591.
25. *ibid.*, 545.
26. *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, 5.



*Nature in Bihārī's Poetry*

1. *Satasat*, verse 432.
2. *ibid.*, 545.
3. *ibid.*, 547.
4. *ibid.*, 546.
5. *ibid.*, 544.
6. *ibid.*, 332.
7. *ibid.*, 708.
8. *ibid.*, 361.
9. *ibid.*, 562.
10. *ibid.*, 704.
11. *ibid.*, 536.
12. *ibid.*, 356.
13. *ibid.*, 505 and 278.
14. *ibid.*, 278.
15. *ibid.*, 563.
16. *ibid.*, 573.

*Philosophy in the Satasat*

1. *Bihārī, an Anthology* (ed., Dr Nagendra), Delhi: Bansal & Co., 1981, pp. 162 and 171.
2. *Satasat*, verses 488, 512, 559, 597 and 598.
3. *ibid.*, 611, 636, 710 and 648.
4. Rudyard Kipling, *If*.
5. *Satasat*, verse 631.
6. *ibid.*, 612.
7. *ibid.*, 641.
8. *ibid.*, 624.
9. *ibid.*, 653.
10. *ibid.*, 609.
11. *ibid.*, 618.
12. *ibid.*, 619.
13. *ibid.*, 608.
14. *ibid.*, 691.
15. *ibid.*, 604.
16. *ibid.*, 601.
17. *ibid.*, 646.

18. *ibid.*, 628.
19. *ibid.*, 602 and 633.
20. *ibid.*, 614, 626, 638 and 644.
21. *ibid.*, 625.
22. *Julius Caesar*, IV. iii. 212–3.
23. *Satasat*, verse 627.
24. *ibid.*, 635.
25. *ibid.*, 642.
26. *ibid.*, 621.
27. *ibid.*, 651.
28. *ibid.*, 608.
29. Rudyard Kipling, *If*.

### *The Devotional Element in Bihārī's Poetry*

1. *Satasat*, verse 688.
2. *ibid.*, 661 and 679.
3. *ibid.*, 658, 662, 663, 665, 666, etc. The controversial verse is 669 in which Bihārī speaks of a formless god.
4. *ibid.*, 660 and 664.
5. *ibid.*, 683.
6. *ibid.*, 684 and 685.
7. *ibid.*, 657.
8. *ibid.*, 678.
9. *ibid.*, 667 and 670.
10. *ibid.*, 655, 658, 662, 682 and 691.

### *Bihārī's Poetic Art*

1. *Bihārī, an Anthology*, ed., Dr Nagendra, Delhi: Bansal & Co, 1981, pp. 77–97 and 199.
2. Rāṣeṣvaraprasāda Chaturvedī, *Mahākavi Bihārīlāl*, Delhi: Bhārati Sāhitya Mandir, p. 125, op. cit.
3. *Bihārī, an Anthology*, ed., Dr Nagendra, Delhi: Bansal & Co., 1981, pp. 62–3.
4. Rāṣeṣvaraprasāda Chaturvedī, *Mahākavi Bihārīlāl*, Delhi: Bhārati Sāhitya Mandir, pp. 145–6, op. cit.
5. *Bihārī, an Anthology*, ed., Dr Nagendra, Delhi: Bansal & Co., 1981, p. 112.
6. *ibid.*, p. 194.

7. *ibid.*, p. 99.
8. *Satasaī*, verses 545, 546 and 547.
9. See for example *Satasaī*, verses 657, 618 and 643.
10. *Viśāla Śabda Sāgara* (Hindi Dictionary), ed., Sri Navalaji, Delhi: New India Book Depot.
11. These are said to be of eleven kinds, namely *līlā*, *vilāsa*, *vicchita*, *vibhrama*, *kilakincita*, *moṭṭāyita*, *vivvoka*, *vihṛta*, *kuṭṭamita*, *lalita* and *helā*.
12. *Satasaī*, verse 9.
13. As for example, *Satasaī*, verses 479, 544 and 551, q.v.
14. *Satasaī*, verses 73, 119, 273, 707, 711 and 301.
15. *ibid.*, 140.
16. *ibid.*, 412.
17. *ibid.*, 390.
18. *ibid.*, 498 (*campā* is a fragrant yellow flower)
19. *ibid.*, 104.

### ***The Satasaī Tradition and Bihārī's Achievement***

1. According to Grierson the *Sapta-Śatika* belongs to the fifth century. Dr Randhir Sinhā (*Kavivara Bihārī aur unkā Yuga*, Kanpur: Anusandhāna Prakāśan, 1964, p. 232) gives the date as AD 200.
2. George A. Grierson, *Indian Lyric Poetry and Bihārī-Satasaī* in *Bihārī, an Anthology*, ed., Dr Nagendra, Delhi: Bansal & Co., 1981, pp. 64–66.
3. *Bihārī, an Anthology*, ed., Dr Nagendra, Delhi: Bansal & Co., 1981, p. 85.
4. *Hindī Sāhitya kā Itihāsa*. (Hindi)
5. *Bihārī ki Satasaī*. (Hindi)
6. *Bihārī aur unkā Sāhitya*. (Hindi)
7. *Bihārī, an Anthology*, ed., Dr Nagendra, Delhi: Bansal & Co., 1981, p. 62.

### ***A Note on the Translation, Transliteration and Arrangement of the Verses***

1. *Bihārī, an Anthology*, ed., Dr Nagendra, Delhi: Based & Co., 1981, p. 63.

## ***Love***

1. According to Hindu astrology a child born at the moment Saturn is in the House of Pisces will become a king. The *nāyaka* has met his beloved on a

Saturday, which is Saturn's day, and so the 'lucky child of love' is born. The woman's messenger tells the *nāyaka*, 'As this child will become a king and enjoy his domain so should you enjoy your girl.'

Indian women apply collyrium (lamp-black) to the edges of their eyelids to make the eyes look lovelier.

3. When there is a whirlpool, boatmen tie a rope to one end of their boat and hold the other fast from the river bank to prevent the boat being caught in it. Here the poet likens the girl's bashfulness to the rope and the boat to her thoughts about her lover.

Expressing a similar thought the *Āryāsaptasāti* says, 'Going round and round in your love-shaped waters, this girl, abandoning propriety, remains caught in a whirlpool.'

5. Duryodhana, Dhṛtarāṣṭra's eldest son, was the leader of the Kauravas, in the great war of the Mahābhārata between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas. According to legend there was a curse on Duryodhana that his death would take place when he was joyful and sorrowful at one and the same moment. While he lay mortally wounded on the battlefield, still thirsting for revenge, he was visited by Aśvatthāmā, son of Droṇa, and two other warriors, the only survivors of his army. He asked them to slay all the Pāṇḍavas, and particularly to bring him the head of Bhīma, who had struck him foully below the waist. Duryodhana's warriors went to the Pāṇḍava camp and, after killing five young sons of the Pāṇḍavas, brought their heads to him. Duryodhana was not able to distinguish the features, but was very happy that revenge had been taken. He asked that Bhīma's head be placed in his hands, and that having been done, pressed on it with his dwindling strength. When he found he could not crush it, he knew it was not Bhīma's head. He found out the deception and was filled with deep remorse for having been instrumental in the slaying of five innocent boys. These contrary feelings of joy and sorrow at the same time, fulfilled the condition of the curse, and he died.

The poet likens the conflicting emotions of joy and sorrow in the mind of the woman going to her mother's house, to Duryodhana's condition. Having experienced the pleasure of love-making with her husband she is now so enamoured of him that even a few days of separation causes her unbearable anguish. At the same time she is happy to go home and meet her parents.

7. Indian women get their noses pierced on the right nostril to wear nose ornaments like a nose-pin or a nose-ring.

8. A *kibalanumā* is believed to be a kind of compass whose needle is so adjusted as to always point towards Mecca. Muslims carried it with them to be able to face Mecca while reciting the *namāza* (prayers). Other commentators interpret the word differently. According to one of them (*Mānasingha*), it means a marionette (*kāthaputli*). In this sense it would mean, in whatever direction the puppet is revolved it turns back to face the audience again. Another commentator (*Kṛṣṇakavi*), taking the word as *kavalanavi*, interprets it to mean a small magic bowl which was used in locating the culprit in case of a theft. The suspects were made to stand in a circle and the bowl placed at the centre. When a *mantra* (sacred charm) was recited, the bowl would start moving and go to everyone by turns, stopping only in front of the thief.

Most probably Bihārī meant the word to signify the magnetic needle which keeps Mecca-wards. Living in the age of the Moghul emperor, Shāh Jahān, he was quite familiar with Muslim customs. Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna, one of Bihārī's noted commentators, also accepts this interpretation. (BBL, p. 28)

The same thought finds place in other poets writing in Hindi or Sanskrit. Sūradāsa uses the simile of the magic bowl in describing how the beloved's gaze stays on her lover alone. Rasalīna uses the same example as Bihārī and says, 'the lover's gaze remains fixed on his beloved like the *kibalanumā*'s needle' (*kibalanuma laurṇ dṛga rahairṇ nirakha mīta ki or*).

The *Āryāsaptasatī* (though giving different examples) expresses the same thought: 'As the quick moving finger touches each bead in a rosary and moves swiftly on to rest on the central bead (which is of the greatest import), so does the girl look on each youth by turns, and ignoring him, finally rests her gaze on you.'

9. The verse is a good example of Bihārī's condensed style of writing and is often quoted to illustrate this quality of his.

Similar is Kālidāsa's description of Śakuntalā stealing a glance at King Duṣyanta (translation Monier Williams):

She did look towards me, though she quick withdrew  
Her stealthy glance when she met my gaze;  
She smiled upon me sweetly but disguised  
With maiden glance the secret of her smiles.  
Coy love was half-unveiled; then sudden checked  
By modesty left half to be divined.

10. The word *hari* can mean either Kṛṣṇa or the sun. The translation takes it to mean the sun. In the alternative Rādhā's gestures could be taken to imply

‘lover, you are always in my heart’. But that wouldn’t be a good enough reaction on Rādhā’s part, seeing her lover was even prepared to fall at her feet!

An *āraṣī* is a kind of ring with a small mirror set in it, worn by Indian women on the thumb of their right hand.

Rādhā touches her breasts with the *āraṣī* to signify that she will meet her lover when the sun has set and it is dark. The *āraṣī* signifies the sun because Rādhā has ‘caught’ the sun’s image in its mirror by turning it towards the sun. Putting the *āraṣī* between her breasts, points out to the setting of the sun—and that is when she will meet Kṛṣṇa.

12. The verse has become famous because it is believed to have provided the occasion for Bihārī’s writing the *Satasatī*. It is said that Jayasingha, the ruler of Amber, got so enamoured of a young girl that he always remained in her company and neglected the affairs of state. So much so that he gave orders that if any of his officials came with state matters and disturbed him in his dalliance, he would be sentenced to death. For a year things went on like this and the rajah’s secretaries managed somehow to carry on the administration. But soon a very important issue came up and it became essential to take the rajah’s orders for it. The secretaries sought Bihārī’s advice, and the poet thought of an ingenious way to set right the erring ruler. He wrote out the verse on a bit of paper and concealed it in the basketful of flowers which used to be taken each day to the king’s bedroom to be spread on the royal bed. Early morning when the flowers had withered, the rajah found something scratching him. It was the slip of paper on which Bihārī’s verse was written. When he read it, the impact on him was so great that he realized his fault and henceforth began to look after the kingdom. He summoned Bihārī to his durbar and asked him to send more of his couplets, promising to give a gold *mohur* for each as a reward. Bihārī wrote about seven hundred verses (*sata*=seven, *sat*=hundred) and that was how the *Satasatī* got its name.

13. Normally it is the huntsmen of the city who hunt for deer in the forests. But in this case it is the other way around. The deer-like eyes of the *nāyikā* shoot arrows at the young men of the city so that they themselves become victims of the hunt of love!

A woman’s lovely eyes are often compared to those of a deer by Hindi and Sanskrit poets.

*Kānancāri* means ‘stretching up to the ears’. It’s not that the woman’s eyes are that long. Indian women paint a dark line to make their eyes seem longer. *The Bride’s Book of Beauty* has the following observation about this : ‘The size

of the eyes is increased by drawing a short, fine pencil mark outwards from the corner of the lids where they join.' (BAH)

A similar idea is expressed by Bhavabhūti:

Her pupils widening behind long lashes  
told of the admiration she felt.  
My heart, poor thing without defense,  
was captured, cut up and swallowed,  
and is now lost for aye.

(SPI, p.141)

14. When someone casts a spell, it is believed its evil effect can be warded off by making an offering of salt and mustard in fire. By doing so the spell rebounds on the person who cast it. The eyes contain salt tears and so metaphorically Kṛṣṇa has made the *nāyikā*'s eyes salty, i.e., has turned her spell against her. This is the significance of the word *lone* (salt).

*Sāje* means 'adorned'. One of the ways of adding beauty to eyes is by applying lamp-black to the edges of the eyelids (see note to verse 479). *The Bride's Book of Beauty* has the following other tips for decorating the eyes : 'Also kohl, made of sulphide of antimony with Chinese or Indian ink blackens them, preserves them against the sun and air and changes them to moonstones, brilliant, glinting, and flashing fire. A simple method of increasing the eyes' depth is to make the lids blue with the juice of the wild plum.' (BAH)

16. For Kāma, see note to verse 463.

17. The translation follows Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna's version (BBL, p. 120). Some commentators take the second *lāi* (not *lāI*, which means have brought) to stand for 'a passage dug by thieves for entering a house' instead of the alternative interpretation meaning 'the fire (of love)'. They interpret the concluding part of the couplet as 'now love has stolen through your eyes like a thief digging a passage for himself, and have set your heart aflame'. Bhagawāna Dīna's reading of the verse seems to be more meaningful and so it has been adopted in the translation.

18. *mukti* meaning 'emancipation', 'liberation' or 'release' is the state conceived by Hindu philosophy in which the soul (*ātman*) becomes one with the Absolute (*Brahman*).

Jagannātha Dāsa Ratnākara, one of Bihārī's renowned commentators, thinks these words should be taken as spoken by the *gopīs* (cowherd girls) to Ūdhava (Kṛṣṇa's friend and counsellor). His interpretation is: 'On hearing Ūdhava speak to them about *mukti* (emancipation), the *gopīs* said "If this emancipation you

speaking of does not provide a way to meet Kṛṣṇa, we have no use for it. If we can be united with him in hell, we do not fear going there for it".

Other critics read in the verse the doctrine of the *dvaitas*, i.e. those who believe in a god with form (Īśvara), and consider emancipation to be the soul's dwelling in heaven with god. If this interpretation is accepted the sense would be: A worshipper of god with form, says to one who believes in a formless god (to refute his doctrine), 'If emancipation does not provide a way to obtain the beloved personal god, it is fit to be shunned. If one can find him even in hell, it were better to go there and undergo hell's torments for union with him.'

These interpretations seem to be unnecessary. Usually Bihārī mentions Kṛṣṇa by any of his numerous names when the verse is meant to refer to him. In this he does not. The simple interpretation is that *sājan* and *piya* here mean the lover (*nāyaka*) and the girl (*nāyikā*). She wishes to convey her intense love for him through her companion.

19. *naṇḍakumāra* means 'son of Nāṇḍa' (*kumāra*: son), i.e. Kṛṣṇa. In the *Āryāsaptasatī*, the Sanskrit poet, Ācārya Goverdhana conveys a similar thought:

Tidying her hair  
with neck bent and  
her tresses massed  
on her face,  
even then somehow  
she manages to glance  
through them at you.

20. *devar* means the younger brother of a woman's husband. Hindi poets often depict the *devar* as being enamoured of such a woman particularly when she is a newly-wed wife and he is unmarried.

The *Gāthāsaptasatī* expresses a similar idea:

Even though her brother-in-law  
lusts for her,  
that virtuous woman  
suffers silently  
and does not tell her husband,  
lest his tempestuous nature  
may create a split in the family.

21. *tribali* means the triple folds appearing on a woman's belly, above her navel. These are considered to be one of the signs of beauty according to Hindi and Sanskrit love poets. Describing a Padminī, the lotus-eyed woman (a woman



of the most beautiful kind), Kalyāna Malla mentions three folds crossing 'her middle, about the umbilical region'. (ARA, p. 114)

*ali ki oṭ hvai* means 'eluding her companion'.

The literal meaning of *oṭ* is 'screen, shelter, or concealment'. Some commentators have therefore taken this to mean, 'The *nāyikā* hid behind her companion and peeped at her lover, herself unseen by him'. But that wouldn't explain why the *nāyikā* bared her midriff region by going through the pretence of raising her hand and shifting her sari up to cover her head. Obviously she did that to hide her love-affair from her companion. In that case her companion could not be an accomplice, which one would have to believe she was, if she acted as a screen for the *nāyikā* to gaze at her lover.

23. *syāma raṅga* has a double meaning. It means 'the love of Kṛṣṇa (he is also called Śyāma, *raṅga* meaning 'love'), or it can be taken as 'black colour' (*śyāma* meaning 'black' or 'dark', and *raṅga* meaning 'hue'). Kṛṣṇa is believed to be of dark complexion. The strangeness lies in the fact that although the *nāyikā*'s mind is drenched in black colour it comes out white! This is meant metaphorically of course. The idea is that love of Kṛṣṇa does not result in agitation but is satisfying and pure.

Some commentators take the verse as relating to a devotee of the god Kṛṣṇa, but since Bihārī is essentially a love poet, it would be more appropriate to interpret it as being for the *nāyikā*.

Poet Jasavantasingha similarly says:

Wonderfully,  
her red-dyed lovelorn mind  
mingling with Kṛṣṇa.  
instead of becoming darker  
emerged white  
shorn of all its dross.

25. Accompanied by her women companions, the *nāyikā* (who is apparently a milkmaid) is out selling curd. Her lover, the *nāyaka*, meets her on the way and in the impetuosity of his passion catches hold of her. She frees herself and addresses her impatient lover in these words. She chides him for appearance's sake because of the presence of her companions, but very subtly signifies her consent also by throwing a hint to him to come secretly to her house when she will satisfy his longing.

Some commentators have interpreted the couplet thus: 'You are shamelessly stopping me on the way. Don't you understand that it's love-making I desire,

while you are asking me for useless things instead, like curd and milk! Why don't you take me somewhere, like to the woods, so that we can make love? If we start doing so here my reputation will be ruined.' (BSR, p. 114) But this interpretation does not seem to be appropriate because the *nāyikā* is out with her companions (milkmaids usually went in company), and she could hardly make her intentions so clear to the *nāyaka* in their presence. In that case she would be what she accuses him of being, i.e. shameless!

26. The *nāyaka* here is most probably Kṛṣṇa (though the poet does not say so specifically), and the *nāyikā*, Rādhā. The idea behind the mingling of the cows is that Rādhā surrenders herself to Kṛṣṇa's love. The moment she sees him she falls deeply in love and says, 'I make no distinction between you and myself. My cows are yours.' Love springs between them in a moment spontaneously.

27. *gaunā* means the ceremony held at the time the bride goes to her husband's home for the first time. Child-marriages were common in Bihārī's days. Girls were often married when they were only about six or seven years old. But they went to their husband after attaining puberty, and when they did, there was a ceremony to celebrate the occasion. This was known as the *gaunā*.

The words *bātaim calīm* ordinarily means 'mention was made', i.e. the *nāyikā* (who had been married) and was now grown up would be going to her husband's home. While talking among themselves one of her companions happened to say that the date of her departure had been decided (this would be determined after consulting the almanac and picking out an auspicious date). But some commentators have stretched the words to mean 'the girl's *gaunā* was postponed for some future date' (taking the word *calīm* to mean *calāimāna*, i.e. 'unsettled'). In that sense the girl is happy to learn that she isn't to go to her husband, and the reason is that she has a secret lover. Going away to her husband will mean parting from him. It is true Bihārī often narrates illicit love too, but here the intention does not seem to be to describe an intriguing girl (known to Hindi poets as a *parakīyā muditā*) who prefers a lover to a husband. Such a girl, if she can carry on a secret affair, would be clever enough to hide her feelings of happiness on learning that she isn't to part with her lover. The girl described in Bihārī's verse seems to be an artless one (known as a *svakīyā*). Her companions must have been tutoring her about the pleasures of sex (as they are often believed to do in Hindi love poetry) and the girl is happy to be able to enjoy those pleasures now.

The interpretation taken in the translation is supported by Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna as well as by other commentators. (BBL, p. 139) Dr Śakuntalā Pāncālā also

gives the meaning of *calitri* as 'having started', 'begun', and not as 'unsettled'. (BBP, p. 191)

30. For *khañjana* see note to verse 479. It is a kind of Indian wagtail. Bihārī has particularly chosen a *khañjana* as the trapped bird because the eyes of a beautiful woman are likened to those of the *khañjana* by Hindi poets. Here the *nāyikā's khañjana*-like eyes are trapped by the birdlime of the *nāyaka's* glances.

31. The *nāyikā* here is perhaps Rādhā and the *nāyaka* is Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is represented as wearing a tiara or coronet, putting on a yellow dress, a garland of flowers round his neck, and holding a flute on which he plays.

32. The verse here refers to Kṛṣṇa, and the *nāyikā* is Rādhā, his beloved, or some other cowherd girl whom he has bewitched. The *nāyikā's* companion is upbraiding her for looking at him again and again thus inviting people's censure. But the *nāyikā* is helpless because dark-complexioned Kṛṣṇa has charmed her by his beauty. The verse contains the *nāyikā's* reply to her companion.

33. The *nāyikā* has been gazing at the *nāyaka* for a long time and her companions get apprehensive that people might start noticing her behaviour. So they try to persuade her to come away: 'You've been gazing at him long now, and that ought to be enough. Now let's go.' The verse gives the *nāyikā's* reply. Some commentators take the *nāyaka* to be Kṛṣṇa, but there is nothing in the verse to indicate this.

34. Some commentators have taken the words to be spoken by a go-between (*dūtī*) to the *nāyaka* when he asks her to arrange a meeting between him and the *nāyikā*. Ratnākara would have them spoken not by a go-between but by a companion of the *nāyikā* to whom the *nāyaka* makes the request. Bhagawāna Dīna takes them as spoken playfully by the *nāyikā* herself when the *nāyaka* asks her to come with him to gather flowers from the arbour. 'You really want to make love I know' she quips him, 'on the excuse of gathering flowers from the arbour'. This appears to be the most likely interpretation. The *nāyaka* here is Kṛṣṇa because he has been called Hari, which is another name for him.

The episode of King Bali is told thus: Bali was a good and virtuous demon-king (*daitya rājah*) who, through his penance defeated Indra, king of the gods, and extended his authority over the three worlds. The gods prayed to Lord Viṣṇu who took the form of a dwarf, Vāmana, and asked Bali for three steps of land as charity. Bali thought of course that this was a mere trifle and readily

agreed. Having been given the boon, the 'dwarf' stepped over heaven and earth in two strides, but spared Bali the nether regions because of the king's kindness to Prahalāda (Bali's grandson and Viṣṇu's devotee). Kṛṣṇa was an incarnation of Viṣṇu, hence the connection between him and Vāmana.

36. The *nāyikā* has been love-making in the forest with the *nāyaka* (who here is Kṛṣṇa because of the mention of the coronet). By chance her companions see her emerging from the forest with her lover and question her about it. She gives them this story. The acrobat of her trumped up version has to be described as wearing a coronet because Kṛṣṇa, whom her companions have seen, wore it. Hindi and Sanskrit poets often make their *nāyikā* trump up a story to hide their amours. Poet Maṇḍana describes a situation in which a *nāyikā* cleverly clears herself with her companions when they happen by chance to see Kṛṣṇa embracing her:

I had gone to draw water from the Yamunā  
when suddenly black clouds arose.  
I hurriedly put the pitcher on my head  
and started climbing the river bank  
when I tripped and was about to fall;  
but Kṛṣṇa, who was there just at that moment,  
caught me in his arms  
and steadied poor me.

38. The *nāyikā* is praising the *nāyaka's* attractive eyes which enslave her mind in spite of herself. Expressing a similar idea, poet Bhikāridāsa says:

Lover, the fascination of your eyes  
is beyond words;  
even when one is careful  
they steal away  
the wealth of the mind.

42. Kṛṣṇa was born in Mathurā and was taken to Gokula to be brought up by Yaśodā and her husband Nānda among the cowherds at Vṛndāvana in the Braja country. Vṛndāvana was the scene of his love exploits with the cowherd girls. Later he returned to Mathurā. The couplet here is spoken by one cowherd belle to another about Kṛṣṇa after he had gone away from Vṛndāvana. She nostalgically recollects his presence at the places where he used to make love to her and her fellow cowherd girls.

45. Poet Matirāma has a similar thought:

What can I do friend?

Ever since I've seen Kṛṣṇa  
my mind is not in my control;  
acting as a broker  
Kāma has sold me to him!

48. Poet Matirāma expresses a similar idea:

They're playing blind-man's-buff,  
and as soon as her lover  
covers her eyes with his hands  
she guesses it's him.

49. The *nāyaka* sees his girl in a thick crowd, perhaps a fair. Fearing that some of her friends may guess their secret love, she does not look at him, but softly whispers something which he can't make out. The incident keeps preying on his mind and vexing him. Maybe, he thinks, she meant to tell him where he could meet her for love-making, and since he failed to catch her words he is deprived of the pleasure.

50. *phirakī laṁṁ* means 'like a *phirakī*'. A *phirakī* is a round piece of leather or wood with two holes in it. By passing a string through these holes and pulling it alternately this way and that, the disc moves round clockwise and then anticlockwise. Poet Deva has a similar idea:

She fears to glance on him freely  
from her casement  
and restlessly wanders  
from window to window  
like a revolving *phirakī*  
to have a glimpse of him.

53. What the poet wants to say is that the girl's ankles are so shapely and beautiful that her lover can't take his eyes off them even for a moment.

54. A *pāil* is an anklet with tiny bells attached to it. When the girl wearing her *pāils* moves, the bells make a melodious tinkling sound.

55. *sāhas* means 'boldness', 'pluck' or 'courage'. The implication is that the *nāyikā* glances again and again at her lover, braving censure or public opprobrium, but can't even then fathom the depth of his beauty, which shines with a new light every time she looks at him. It is like a swimmer who, because of dangerous sea animals like crocodiles etc., can't get across the river. The *nāyikā*'s eyes are likened to the swimmer, and the sea creatures to the people who are there to criticize the girl who shamelessly gazes on her lover.

56. The reference is to the abduction of Rukmiṇī by Kṛṣṇa. Rukmiṇī was the daughter of the rajah of Kundulpur. Kṛṣṇa wanted to marry her and she too was in love with him, but her brother, Rukma, persuaded her father to wed her to Kṛṣṇa's rival, Śiśupāla. Rukmiṇī sent a message to her lover, asking him to come to her aid. Kṛṣṇa arrived while the preparations for the wedding were going on. But meanwhile his old enemy, Jarasandha, a demon, had also come along with his army of demons. This dismayed Rukmiṇī, but her fears were soon dispelled when Kṛṣṇa arrived. Soon after, Balarāma, his warrior brother, along with his band of soldiers, also reached there. On the wedding day, Rukmiṇī, guarded by Śiśupāla's soldiers went to worship the goddess at the local temple on the outskirts of the city. Kṛṣṇa appeared suddenly and, surprising Śiśupāla's soldiers, lifted her into his chariot and sped away.

60. The incident referred to in the verse is one of the episodes of Kṛṣṇa's romantic exploits with the cowherd girls. The girls, having discarded their clothes, were bathing naked in the river Yamunā. Kṛṣṇa came quietly, and gathering all their clothes, climbed up a tree. The disconcerted milkmaids, covering their breasts and private parts with their hands, came out of the water and beseeched him to return their clothes. Instead of doing so the mischievous lad asked them to raise their hands and pray to the sun god, so that their breasts, which they had hidden, may be exposed to his view. The girls, who were pretending to be angry (they were not really so because they were eager to show their lover their shapely bodies!) could not help smiling at his ingenious device to see them entirely nude.

61. *surati* means 'memory' or 'remembrance' and *su rati* 'the recollection of his blissful love-making' (*su*= 'beautiful' or 'sweet', *rati*= 'love' or 'love-making'). An interpretation of *su rati* made by one commentator as 'not for a moment', taking *rati* or *ratti* to mean 'a little', seems quite unnecessary. (BBB, p. 160) Firstly it would leave us only with the 'memory of Kṛṣṇa' (while Kṛṣṇa would assuredly be remembered by the girl for his love-making too), and secondly the first line already conveys the sense that Kṛṣṇa's remembrance never leaves the *nāyikā*. Its repetition in the second line would be superfluous.

62. Some commentators take the words of the couplet to be spoken in reply by a virtuous wife to her companion who tries to transfer her love from her husband to another man. But such a situation is rather unusual in Hindi poetry. If the woman is so faithful to her husband, her friend would surely know it. She would hardly make an effort to divert the woman's affections. Yet another interpretation is that the words are meant to be the reply of a firm believer in a

certain religious creed, whom her friend is trying to convert to another faith. (BSS, p. 219) This, however, seems even less likely.

65. The *nāyikā* (who is a village milkmaid) is churning curd to convert it into butter and buttermilk. The process in the Indian villages was to mix water with curd and then churn it with a wooden stick having a flower-shaped end which stirred up the curd and water. The curd was churned with water gradually added to it. So the girl has two earthen pots, one containing the curd and the other water (which she will mix in it). Her lover's coming so excites her that she begins churning the water instead of the curd, and that too with the flower-shaped end of the stick upwards and the plain end downwards!

69. Bihārī's comparison is ingenious inasmuch as the hawk is known to fly rather low, but when it spots a prey, it goes high up—much higher than its victim—and then suddenly swoops down to catch the bird in its claws. The verse depicts the poet's close observation of the habits of birds of prey.

70. The joining of the hands is one of the important ceremonies observed in a Hindu marriage. The bride's father ceremonially places the bride's hand on that of the bridegroom. This is called *pāṇigrahaṇa* (*pāṇi*='hand', *grahaṇa*='taking hold of' or 'holding'). The equivalent words used in the verse are *hathalemaini* (*hathale*='the *pāṇigrahaṇa* ceremony', *maini*='in').

*kuśa* grass is a kind of grass used by Hindus in religious ceremonies. The marriage is complete only after the bride and the groom take seven rounds of the fire with their garments knotted, and this comes last of all. The standing of the hair and perspiration—both signs of sexual longing—are likened to the *kuśa* grass and sacred water respectively, both of which are used in the ritual.

72. Some commentators (including Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna) take *pl̥thi die* to mean 'turning away (from the world)' i.e. 'becoming disinterested', and interpret the verse as follows: 'Seeing the splendour of your body through your casement, he has got disinterested in everything else. Caring for you alone, his glance is always fixed on your window.' (BBL, p. 99) An argument given in favour of this interpretation by one commentator is that it is not possible for the lover to wake up the whole night, and even if he does so how can he hope to see his girl in the dark through the casement? (BSR, p. 218) But this does not seem good enough to reject the other interpretation (of Ratnākara) adopted in the translation. The intensity of the *nāyaka*'s love would be enough to keep him awake nightlong, hoping to see his girl. Besides, she might be having a lamp burning in her room, and might keep her window open because of the summer's heat. The night, when the girl would be in *déshabillé*, must be

providing a better opportunity than the day to have a more intimate sight of her beautiful limbs!

73. Paurāṇic tales means stories from the *Purāṇas* (Hindu scriptures) written in verse interspersed with various dialogues and observations. They contain many mythical stories of gods and goddesses. The *nāyikā*'s lover is a youth who earns his living by reciting the *Purāṇas* to audiences interested in them. In the course of this he relates an incident of illicit amour. A woman, who is his mistress, is also present in the audience, and she gives him a flirtatious smile when he is relating it, but the youth does not wish the secret to be out, and forces back his own smile. An observant woman in the audience however, cleverly guesses the truth and tells her friend about the incident.

76. *Phāga* is the Hindu festival of Holi which is held in the bright half of the *Phālguna* month (February–March). It is celebrated by sprinkling coloured water on one another and also by applying coloured powders on the face. Red powder made of a farinaceous material is known as *gulāl*. If, while smearing it on a reveller, a little of it accidentally gets into the eyes it can cause a great deal of pain and smarting.

78. The *rasa maṇḍala* or *rasa* dance is one in which men and women dance together, holding each other's hands. The *lahācheha* is that stage of this circular dance when it gathers speed and the dancers whirl round very swiftly. The *rasa* dance of the *lahācheha* kind is believed to have been accomplished by Kṛṣṇa's delusive power. Archer has the following description:

The cowgirls in pairs joined hands and Kṛṣṇa was in their midst. Each thought he was at her side and did not recognize him near anyone else. They put their fingers in his fingers and whirled about with rapturous delight. Kṛṣṇa in their midst was like a lovely cloud surrounded by lightning. (AL, p. 43)

79. The couplet expresses Rādhā's grief on Kṛṣṇa's departure from the Braja country (Vṛndāvana) for Mathurā. The river reminds her of Kṛṣṇa, firstly because of its dark waters (Kṛṣṇa was also dark-hued) and secondly because the river bank was the scene of their amorous sports.

Some commentators, like Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna, interpret *kharhauri hauri* as 'seething' or 'churning', and take the couplet as spoken by Ūdhava (Kṛṣṇa's friend) to Kṛṣṇa. (BBL, p. 221) In that case the sense would be that Rādhā's hot tears are so copious that where they fall they make the waters boil! But that would be too fanciful an interpretation.



82. *pl̥t-paṭ* means 'yellow garment' (*pl̥t*='yellow', *paṭ*='garment'). Kṛṣṇa is usually shown as wearing a yellow dress.

84. *raharīṇa-gharī*: a *rahaṭa*, sometimes called a Persian wheel, is a contrivance in villages used by cultivators to draw water from a well. A number of bucket-shaped pots are strapped on to a leather band which moves along an axle so that each pot goes below the water level, gets filled, and moves up. The water is emptied outside and taken by a pipe to the fields for irrigation. Thus each pot keeps on drawing water from the well as it moves up and down on the leather strap. A pot may be scooping up water at one moment, another emptying it, a third dropping below the water level and yet another pot getting out of it. In the same way, says the poet, the girl's eyes keep brimming with tears, shedding them, swimming with tears, and drowning in them.

88. The slayer here refers to Kāmadeva, the Hindu god of love, who strikes his victims with his flower-tipped arrows and makes them slaves to love. (see note to verse 463)

91. For *gulāl* see note to verse 76 *ante*.

93. The strangeness of love lies in its having contrary results. Ordinarily it is things which entangle with one another that break. In love the lover's eyes are entangled but what breaks are family ties. In a society in which marriages were arranged it is obvious that the secret love of the *nāyaka* and the *nāyikā* would invite censure from their families, and they would disown them. Again, if a string snaps, the only way to join the two bits is to knot them together. Here, however, love springs in the genial minds of the lovers but it awakens jealousy in the hearts of evil-minded folk who grudge their good fortune. Thus love's string is tied in the minds of lovers but the knot finds place in the minds of those who are envious of them.

Poet Rasanidhi has a similar thought:

Say how does it happen  
that the eyes are entangled  
but 'tis the minds that are tied?  
In love's land I've seen strange things!

And at another place he says:

Strange are love's ways,  
one thing is broken  
quite another joined,  
and the knot put on a third!

103. Some commentators think the couplet is meant to convey a taunt to the *nāyikā* by the woman go-between: 'You've been entrusting me with messages of love to convey to your lover, but now that you are sure of his love you've unceremoniously dropped me!' But most probably the poet's intention was just to make a comment on the limited utility of such go-betweens.

*kalābūt* is a word of Persian origin (*kālābud*). In constructing arches a temporary support of mud, plaster, or bricks, was usually given till the arch became strong enough to stand by itself. Then the substructure was removed.

109. *loṭ* or *tribali* means the three folds or wrinkles appearing on the belly above the navel of a woman which are considered to be a sign of beauty. See note to verse 21.

Certain commentators, including Ratnākara, read *lauṭ* for *loṭ* in the couplet (*lauṭ* means 'turning back'). They interpret it as follows: 'Seeing her lover on the way the *nāyikā* raised her hand to pull down her veil. This caused her blouse to shift up and to hide her bare midriff from him, she hastily turned back. This gesture of his beloved filled the *nāyaka* with delight.'

The interpretation, however, seems unlikely. Hindi poets seldom show their lovers charmed with a woman's back but the lovely folds on her belly are quite another matter. The turning back of the *nāyikā* would disappoint her lover rather than captivate him!

110. The translation follows the interpretation of Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna (BBL, pp. 15–16). The *nāyaka* has come disguised as the barber's wife (who customarily visited rich households to settle the hair, apply lacquer dye to the feet, massage the body etc., of the lady of the house). He starts settling the *nāyikā*'s hair. His make-believe is perfect but the thrills his touch send through her body arouse her suspicion.

A different interpretation is given by Ratnākara and others. According to these commentators the *nāyikā* sends her companion to deliver her lover a message. The lover, who is enamoured of the lovely messenger, makes her stop for a while and (perhaps after making love to her during which her tresses open out) settles her hair himself. He does it in the same manner as he has been arranging the *nāyikā*'s hair. So she guesses at once that her messenger is having an affair with the *nāyaka*.

This interpretation is also possible, but it does not account for the thrill felt by the *nāyikā* from the caress of the hands of the disguised *nāyaka*. The hands would be able to excite her desire only if they were the *nāyaka*'s.

113. According to popular belief the crow has two eye-sockets but only one pupil, and this keeps moving by turns from one socket to the other. In the same way, imagines the poet, the *nāyaka* and the *nāyikā* have only one soul between them which keeps both alive.

114. The *nāyaka* and the *nāyikā* met each other, and when she looked at him ardently he fell in love with her and began to yearn for her. When the *nāyikā*'s companion conveyed this to her, the *nāyikā* answered her in these words.

119. *prasāda* ('holy offering partaken of by a devotee') has no suitable equivalent in English. When Hindu worshippers make offerings of flowers, flower garlands, sweets etc., to the deity of a temple, the temple priest gives them a part of the offering, or some other thing offered by another devotee, as *prasāda*. This is reverentially taken by the worshippers. If it is a flower garland, as in this case, the worshipper wears it round his neck, or puts it away in some suitable place.

By some chance the garland which the priest gives as *prasāda* to the *nāyikā* (who goes to worship in the temple) is the one which the *nāyaka* had previously on his visit made an offering of. The *nāyikā* recognizes it and thrills with joy to feel her lover's garland round her neck. The priest, who is unaware of their romance, thinks it is because of her excess of devotion to the deity!

123. *mehndī* is the henna plant known as *camphire* in Palestine and *hennah* in Iran. Pliny calls it 'the cypress of Egypt'. It is commonly grown in India. When young, it has smooth twigs which later become thorny. It blooms throughout the year with flowers of delicate fragrance, but is at its best in the summer and rainy seasons. The shrub is particularly valued for the red dye yielded by its leaves when crushed into a paste and dampened. Indian girls apply the paste to their nails, palms and feet (often in lovely patterns) and allow the paste to dry. The paste is then washed off leaving a red dye on the spots to which it was applied.

The *nāyikā*'s ardour (due to her lover being near her) makes her perspire, and the paste which is in the process of drying gets soaked in her sweat! So her companion asks her lover to go elsewhere for sometime to allow the paste to dry and colour her nails.

125. For *gulāl* see note to verse 76.

126. Obviously the balconies of the lovers adjoin each other and are separated either by just one partition wall in between, or their houses are so close that the walls along their balconies are almost each to each. The second possibility is

greater because if there are two separate walls close together (with a little space in between) the lovers would have to lean forward to be able to kiss.

127. *Pūs* is the tenth month of the Hindu calendar, corresponding to December–January—the coldest part of the Indian winter.

Some commentators make out that the *nāyikā* perspires just because of the thrill she experiences on thinking about her lover. But seeing that it is the coldest part of winter, the more likely meaning is that she has come after vigorous love-making, and it is that which has made her perspire.

128. The Holī festival is celebrated by spraying coloured water on one another through syringes. The objective is to make a person soaking wet. Normally after that he is spared, as then the water can hardly drench him more. But in this case, just as the lovers' greedy glances can't stop even after love's surfeit, the revellers go on sending jets of coloured water on each other, even though they are fully soaked!

129. The reference is to Kṛṣṇa who is of a dark complexion. He visits his girl, perhaps on the sly. On one of these occasions her companion happens to see him and marks the disturbed state of her friend, who is so much in love with Kṛṣṇa that the very sight of him sends shivers of excitement through her. Her friend is surprised to see her thus. The girl tries to hide her true feeling by making her believe that she is trembling not because of uncontrollable passion but because of sheer fright at seeing the dark stranger in her house!

131. A *tilak* is a vertical mark made by a powder or paste on the middle of the forehead. It can be a sacerdotal mark or (as here) put on by women for adornment.

132. Some commentators, like Ratnākara, take the words as spoken by the *nāyaka*: 'That fair girl smiled and spoke to me artlessly. And now I am ever longing to hear her speak so again.' The translation follows Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna's version (BBL, p. 128), and has been preferred because it seems to be more expressive.

136. *cora-mihicanī* (blind-man's-buff) is a game in which six or seven persons (both boys and girls) take part. One of them, 'the thief', is blindfolded and the others hide. The 'thief' then removes the cloth-band from his or her eyes and runs about searching for them. Those who are hiding try to run quickly and touch the *khuṭavāri* (the place where the 'thief' is blindfolded). If the 'thief' can touch the player before the player reaches the *khuṭavāri*, that person becomes the 'thief'. Thus the game goes on.

The game provides several opportunities for the *nāyaka* and the *nāyikā* to embrace. When he takes his turn as 'thief' she comes forward to blindfold him standing close, so that her breasts are pressed against his back. When they touch each other in the game, they have a hurried embrace. If some other player becomes the 'thief', they go and hide together and hug to their heart's content. And if either the *nāyaka* or the *nāyikā* is the 'thief', they get together (unseen by others), under pretence of searching, and embrace for a brief moment.

138. The *nāyikā* is going along with her companion when she suddenly sees the *nāyaka* coming her way. She stops all at once and begins to gaze longingly at him. Her companion, who is unaware of the secret love between them, questions her about this strange behaviour.

140. *cutakl* is a long tapering rope made of hemp and shaped like a woman's braid of hair. In training a horse this is given a snap several times near him so that he is impelled to run. At the same time the rider restrains him by pulling the reins. So the horse is prevented from moving forward and keeps prancing up and down. This forced prancing is called *khūmd*.

143. *cakor* is the Indian red-legged partridge which, according to poetic belief, eats fire and is enamoured of the moon at which it keeps staring fixedly. The *nāyaka* has been showing indifference to the *nāyikā*, and her companion suggests she should find another lover. But the *nāyikā* tells her in clear words that her love for the *nāyaka* is too deep to be switched on to another man.

144. *nakh-ruci-cūran* literally means 'the powder of the nails' beauty'. Thugs used to exercise their magic powers and prepare a powder from dead men's nails. When this was sprinkled on the victim he would be spellbound and helplessly follow the thug, who took him to a lonely spot and robbed him.

Certain commentators, like Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna, omit this couplet.

145. The terms *tāla*, *tāna*, *swara* and *rāga* are from Indian music, the basic principles of which are quite different from European music. Indian music is based on melody, western music on rhythm. Various combinations of notations are known as *rāga* (the basic modal pattern), and though there may be many *rāgas*, each one follows a fixed pattern which can't be violated.

*tāna* means 'a tune', *tāla* 'musical measure' and *swara* 'notation'.

147. A *vaidya* is a physician who practises the *āyurvedic* (Hindu) system of medicine.

149. Some commentators, including Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna, read *tilaka* for *tilaku*, taking it to mean 'a vertical beauty mark'. The girl's beauty mark is

likened to an arrow, so that the verse reads, 'That young woman, her forehead adorned with an arrow-like beauty mark, glanced at me for a moment, and like a flame of fire, turned away from her casement.' The translation (which follows Ratnākara's version) takes the word as *tilaku* meaning 'a moment'. The idea is that the girl peeped out of her casement for a moment, and ever since the *nāyaka* is bewitched by her beauty. (BBL, p. 36 and BBP, p. 223)

The effect of the girl's sight on the *nāyaka* is a significant factor which has been missed in Bhagawāna Dīna's version, and so that of Ratnākara has been preferred.

*nāvak sara* is explained by Bhagawāna Dīna as follows: 'This is a kind of tiny arrow which is shot through a cylindrical device on the bow. In fact this cylinder is known as a *nāvak*. But by implication it has come to mean "a small arrow or a dart".' (BBL, p. 36)

150. According to the text the girl, who may be Rādhā or some other cowherd girl whose lover is Kṛṣṇa, addresses these words to her right arm. But seeing it is unusual to address a limb, this has been avoided in translation.

The throbbing of a woman's right arm, or of the right side of her body, is considered a good omen according to Indian superstition. As a reward for throbbing, the girl promises that she'll use only her right arm (the bringer of bliss) when she clasps Kṛṣṇa to her bosom.

155. *Bhṛṅgi kṛt* (*kṛt*='insect') is a kind of insect of the wasp variety about which it is popularly believed that it catches other tiny insects and carries them to its hole. Then it keeps buzzing round them ceaselessly. Just by looking at the *bhṛṅgi* all the time, the shapes of the tiny creatures are transformed and they all become *bhṛṅgis*!

160. For the incident of the lifting of Goverdhana mount see note to verse 438.

161. Some commentators (e.g. Bhagawāna Dīna) interpret 'O thorn! By getting into my feet you saved my life; for I was dying for his caress, and just then he came that way, and holding my foot fondly in his hands, took it out.' (BBL, p. 104) It's more likely, however, that the *nāyikā* was dying of grief because of mistakenly feeling that the man whom she loved was not interested in her. That could have caused the kind of brooding sorrow that might have taken her life. She couldn't have died merely because her lover had not petted her for so long. In that case his touch could have revived her with pleasure, but surely not saved her from dying! The translation, therefore follows the version of other commentators like Dr Bhāṭṭ and Śrī Rākeśa. (BBB, p. 383 and BSR, p. 483)

162. The *nāyaka* and the *nāyikā* were going to worship in the local temple, where shoes were not allowed. So they went barefoot. The path by which they went was rough and littered with gravel on one side and smooth on the other. Out of love for her, the *nāyaka* left the smooth path for his beloved to walk on, and himself took the rough one. Seeing that the sharp gravel was hurting his feet, she beckoned to him to walk on her side of the path. But he found her gesture so charming that he kept straying to the gravelled path again and again just to hear her go on repeating it!

164. An *āraśī* is a mirror-set ring which a Hindu woman sometimes wears on the thumb of her right hand.

171. The *nāyaka* and the *nāyikā* are celebrating the Holi festival in which the revellers throw fistfuls of *gulāl* (red farinaceous powder) on each other. (see also note to verse 76)

179. Gokul is the country district near Mathurā. The home of Kṛṣṇa's foster-parents, Devakī and Vasudeva, it was the scene of Kṛṣṇa's amours with the milkmaids.

182. The verse lends itself to at least three different interpretations. Rādhā has had a tiff with Kṛṣṇa, and has kept herself aloof for sometime. She refuses to be reconciled with Kṛṣṇa. Two of Rādhā's companions are speculating on the chances of reconciliation. The different interpretations are as follows: The love of these two is everlasting. They will certainly make up because both of them belong to noble families. Rādhā is the daughter of the great Vṛṣabhānu, and Kṛṣṇa brother of the illustrious Balarāma. The second version is: They can never love each other for long, for Rādhā is the daughter of the Sun (who's particularly fiery when he is in the Taurus zodiac) and Kṛṣṇa brother of the raging Śeṣanāga (whose incarnation Balarāma was believed to be). Yet another interpretation is as follows: It's better that their love ceases, for it can't be of the tender kind. Aren't they beasts! For is not Rādhā the sister of a bull (i.e. a cow), and Kṛṣṇa no less, as he's the brother of a bull (i.e. a bull)!

These different interpretations emanate from the varied meanings of some of the words in the couplet, viz:

*ciraḥīva*—(a) 'not joined in any way' or in other words 'always joined' (b) 'not joined at all'.

*vṛṣabhānu*—(a) 'daughter of the mighty Vṛṣabhānu' (b) 'daughter of the Sun in the Taurus zodiac' (c) *vṛṣabha anujā* (*vṛṣabha*='bull', *anujā*='sister') 'sister of a bull'.

*haladhar ke bīr*—(a) ‘brother of the powerful Baladeva’ (b) ‘brother of Haladhar (Śeṣanāga)’ (c) ‘brother of a bull’ (*hala*=‘plough’, *dhar*=‘bearer of’ i.e. ‘one who is yoked to a plough’, or in other words ‘a bull’).

Śeṣanāga or Śeṣa is King of the serpent race (*nāgas*) and of the infernal regions (*pātāla*). He has a thousand heads which forms the canopy of Viṣṇu. Sometimes he is shown as supporting the world or holding on himself the seven hills. When he yawns earthquakes occur. He is believed to have been incarnated in Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa’s brother.

The translation follows the second interpretation for the following reasons: Being of noble lineage can hardly have much effect on lovers’ tiffs, so the first version seems unlikely. The love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, considered divine by devotees, can’t be brought to the level of bestiality, even in an attempt to humour. One would never expect that of a Kṛṣṇa devotee such as Bihārī, even though this interpretation has been accepted by some commentators, notably Bhagawāna Dīna. (BBL, pp. 3–4) Thus the third version too is unacceptable.

184. Some commentators take *manamohana* to be Kṛṣṇa, which seems unnecessary because *manamohana* means ‘he who captivates the heart’ (*mana*=‘heart’, *mohana*=‘captivating’). Even though Kṛṣṇa is also known as Manamohana, the other explanation interpreting the word as just a bewitching lad seems to be more appropriate here.

186. *loṭan* is another word for *tribali*, the triple fold forming above the waist and below the navel, when a woman bends her body. (see note to verse 21) The *Gāthāsaptasatī*, too, speaks of such a woman gathering flowers:

That roguish lad  
keeps following the woman  
who’s picking blossoms in the garden,  
pretending to ask her  
the price of the flowers,  
when all he wants  
is to gaze at her bosom  
beneath her raised hands!

187. The gifts exchanged by the lovers through a messenger denote their infatuation. The significance of the rose is ‘My heart is imbued with your love as inseparably as the pigment colouring this rose’. The betel has the same significance, viz. ‘My heart, too, is coloured with your love like the colour of this betel’. Lovers often sent such symbolic presents to each other through messengers or friends.



189. *besari moti*—*besara* or *nath* is a gold ring with one large pearl, worn by Indian women on the left nostril. The ring passes through a hole bored in the nostril, and the pearl rests on the woman's lips because the ring reaches down to them.

The *Abhijñānaśakuntalam* says in a similar strain: 'O black bee! I am still wondering if this girl (*Śakuntalā*) will accept me, and you are fearlessly savouring the nectar of her lips!'

190. *berndi* is an ornament worn by Indian women. It is suspended by a string which runs along the parting of the hair and hangs on the forehead. It is set with gems and diamonds. The planet Mercury (believed to be the son of the Moon), is usually assigned the colour green. But according to Indian astrology Mercury acquires the quality, colour and nature of the planet in whose orbit it is moving at that time. Since it is depicted as being 'in the lap of Moon' it wouldn't be wrong to take its colour as white (as Bihārī has described it). In fact this shows the poet's intimate knowledge of astrology.

The *nāyikā*'s companion also cleverly hints that if the *nāyaka* visits his beloved at this time, he will get the utmost pleasure, for when Mercury is in the House of the Moon, it is considered to be an auspicious moment. The time will not only be favourable to love-making, in all probability the union might lead to the birth of a son. Mercury reposing in the lap of his father, the Moon, is suggestive of that.

## Love-Making

192. Some commentators give '*garab*' its literal meaning, i.e. 'arrogance', suggesting that the *nāyikā* has played the man in love-making. The contrary emotions of 'shyness' and 'arrogance', 'indolence' and 'longing', they feel, convey this. But perhaps this would be reading more in the lines than what the poet meant.

193. Poet Amaru describes a similar situation:

When, touching the knot of her brassière,  
her lover said 'O woman of languorous eyes,  
when you take these off you look lovelier',  
her eyes beamed with the pleasure to come.  
Seeing her so  
her friends smiled  
and gladly went away.

In the *Kṛṣṇacarita* (Exploits of Kṛṣṇa) there is the following passage: 'When her companions saw this (i.e. signs that the two wanted to make love), they started going out one by one, hand on mouth to conceal their smiles. The flame of the earthen oil lamp also began to quiver with the breeze raised by their sari ends, as though it too was about to close its eyes and depart!'

196. Among the many forms of kissing described by Vātsyāyana, there is one called the 'clasping kiss'. This is when one of the two (either the man or the woman) takes both, the upper and lower, lips of the other between his or her own (KS, p. 37).

The woman has been making love, and her lover has bruised her lips during love-making so that they have become suffused with blood. In order to hide this from her companion she chews a number of betels whose red spittle seems to colour her lips red. But soon the betel-juice fades away and her friend becomes wise to her love-making.

Describing the lips of Padmāvatī after her night of love-making with Ratnasena, her companion says:

Your lips have been moistened  
by those of your lover  
and appear as though you've  
chewed betels!

(Malik Muhammad Jaṣī, *Padmāvatī*)

197. Some commentators interpret the verse in the sense that the rope of the swing broke, and just then the *nāyaka* happened to be there. They censure Bihārī for making his *nāyaka* so callous as to harbour thoughts of love-making when his beloved is in danger of her life! One of them, for example says: 'This couplet has crossed the bounds of propriety. Love has become in it obscenity. The *nāyaka* is out and out a voluptuary and there is not even human sympathy in him, to say nothing of true love. The *nāyikā* has fallen from the swing, and her life is in danger, and here is this unfeeling lover of hers who can think only of assuaging his lust!' (BSR, p. 90)

There is nothing, however, in the verse to warrant such an explanation. The relevant words are *parī parī-sī tūṭī*. Here the first *parī* is an adaptation of the Hindi *paṛnā*, which means 'to drop' as well as 'to fall down'. Thus the sense would be 'dropped off'. There is no hint of the breaking of the rope or of an accident. Then the comparison to a fairy nymph dropping from the sky (*parī-sī tūṭī*) confirms the sense of the *nāyikā*'s jumping off the swing of her own free will. Perhaps she is swinging just gently and gets off and runs to meet her lover, maybe stumbling somewhat before he steadies her. The rest is of course instinct.

198. *kinkini* is a band of silver or gold Indian women wear round the waist. A number of tiny bells are attached to it, which tinkle with the movement of the waist.

*mañjira* or *nūpur* is an anklet, also with small bells on it. It is worn as an ornament round the ankles, particularly by a newly-wed girl.

*paryau joru*—when two wrestlers fight, each one is said to be the *joṛā* (match) of the other. When one of them is flung down by the other on the wrestling ground they say ‘The victor’s *joṛā* has been flung down’. Love-making is here likened to a wrestling match. The victorious *nāyikā* has, so to say, flung down the *nāyaka* and is astride him.

*viprit rati* (love-making when the woman is on top) is mentioned by various Hindu erotic writers like Vātsyāyana (KS, p. 54), Kalyāna Malla (AR, pp. 240-1) and Paṇḍit Kokkoka (*Rati Rahasya*).

Poet Bhavabhuti describes a woman taking the man’s role in love-making:

When the anklet has grown still  
the girdle’s sound is heard.  
It’s ever when the lover tires,  
the mistress plays the man.

(SPI, p. 158)

Another Sanskrit poet, Ajñāta, says in the same strain:

The sound of her anklets has ceased  
now only her girdle bells jingle,  
it’s evident he’s exhausted with love’s task  
and so she plays the lover.

199. The oil-lamp here means a shallow open receptacle with a cotton wick, burning in mustard oil.

A Sanskrit poet has a similar thought:

‘Sweetheart, let me play the mistress, you the lover.’  
To this she answered ‘No’ and shook her head;  
but slipping the bracelet from her wrist to mine,  
without the use of words she gave consent.

(SPI, p. 157)

200. *bindulī* or *bindī* is a round mark of vermilion powder made by a married woman on the middle of her forehead. The lovers have been adding a little bit of variety into their love-making. The *nāyikā* has worn her lover’s clothes, and he hers, also adorning himself as a woman would. She was on top and he beneath. Afterwards the *nāyaka* apparently forgot to wipe off the vermilion mark from his forehead. In the morning the *nāyikā*’s companions see him like

that and they guess their secret. But the *nāyikā* keeps on denying it. One of her companions, therefore, points out (in the verse) the futility of her denial.

Some commentators feel that the verse can be explained by just assuming that the *nāyikā* has been playing the lover's role, and it is needless to bring in the exchange of clothes (as Ratnākara and others do). One commentator, who does not favour Ratnākara's view, reasons out that the vermilion mark has appeared on the *nāyaka*'s brow simply because when the *nāyikā* (who's on top) has bent down to kiss the *nāyaka*, their foreheads have met, and the *bindi* mark has left a similar smudge on his brow, which he has forgotten to wipe off. (BSR, p. 127) But in that case (1) Why should it be assumed by the girl's companion that the *nāyikā* has been on top? The smudge could have been there even if they had been love-making in the normal manner. Whether it was the *nāyikā* who bent down to kiss the *nāyaka* or the other way round, the result would have been the same. (2) If the exchange of clothes etc., explanation is to be discarded, one would expect a *binduli* mark on the *nāyikā*'s brow in addition to the smudge on the *nāyaka*'s brow. But the verse does not point to this. (3) Quite often instead of vermilion powder a light metal (now plastic) disc is firmly fixed on the same spot. Maybe it is this. The *nāyaka* would have put it on when he dressed up as a woman, but just forgot to remove it.

202. The *nāyikā*'s pride could either be due to her being able to get such enjoyment from her lover as her co-wives were not able to, or because she has triumphed over him in love-making.

203. *rada-chada* means 'marks made by the teeth in biting'. Hindu erotic writers recommend the love-bite as one of the acts of love-making (KS, p. 43; AR, pp. 219–21). The Sanskrit poet, Vallāṇa has a similar thought:

Your lower lip is a ruby  
despite its flaw,  
there is no need, sweet innocent,  
to hide it with your hand.

(SPI, p. 162)

208. A *prauthā* is a woman of the most wanton kind. She is always eager for love-making and wishes to be with her lover day and night. She does not care for what people might say about her behaviour, and is utterly shameless. She gloats over the love-marks made by her lover on her body during love-making.

An *apauthā* or *navothā* is a newly-wed girl inexperienced in the ways of love. She has been described by the poet, Matirāma as 'an extremely shy and quiet girl, who does not readily come to her lover's arms'.

Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna's interpretation of the verse is slightly different. He does not picture the newly-wed girl as intoxicated. It is in the *nāyaka*'s eyes, which are intoxicated by her beauty, that the more wanton and desireful for love-making she becomes. (BBL, p. 77) But that does not explain why a newly-wed girl should start behaving in this way. Her being tipsy could, on the other hand, be reason enough.

210. In other words, when the *nāyaka* pulled off his sweetheart's clothes to undress her for love-making, she bashfully closed her eyes.

213. Hindu gods are often represented with their consorts. Viṣṇu (the Preserver) is shown seated on a lotus with his spouse, Lakṣmī, beside him, or reclining on a lotus leaf. Śiva (the Destroyer) is represented with his consort, Pārvatī, whom he once embraced so passionately that they 'merged into a single androgynous being called Ardhanārī'. (HWB, vol. 2, p. 193) Śiva is sometimes shown as 'Ardhanārśvara (Hermaphrodite Lord), fused halfway into the form of his spouse Pārvatī, or shown as a half-male, half-female figure in sculpture and painting, exhibiting male elements along the right side of his body, and female elements on the left side'. (HWB, vol. 1, p. 43)

'Śiva embraced Pārvatī's bosom alone. But that won't satisfy the *nāyikā*,' her messenger tells the *nāyaka*.

214. Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna interprets the verse as though the *nāyikā* had dreamt that her lover had clasped her hand through the hole in the wall. But if Bihārī meant it to be love-making in a dream, the hole in the wall would be unnecessary. The lover could very well have embraced his girl as she slept. The partition wall need not have come in the way at all!

216. The woman described is a newly-wed who has got over her shyness and who has begun to respond to her husband's love somewhat. She is what Hindi poets call a *viśrabdhanavothā nāyikā*.

218. The woman is evidently a newly-wed who has not yet got over her shyness. Or maybe she is a bashful girl whom her lover is trying to win over in the *Kāma Sūtra* manner: 'When a girl accepts the embrace, the man should put a *tambula* or a screw of betel-nut and leaves in her mouth, and if she will not take it, he should induce her to do so. . . . At the time of giving this *tambula* he should kiss her mouth softly and gracefully without making any sound.' (KS, p. 72)

221. Some commentators (among them Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna and Devendra Śarmā 'Indra') have interpreted the verse in a question-answer form. (BBL, pp.

143–4; BSS, p. 320) According to them the *nāyikā* asks the *nāyaka*, ‘By what is it disproved that even a little untruth creates unpleasantness?’ The *nāyikā* answers ‘When a woman says “no! no!” at the commencement of love-making.’ According to Devendra Śarmā the question–answer takes place between the *nāyaka* and the *nāyikā*’s messenger.

It may true that *kaun bāt pari jāi* (‘By what is this evident?’) in the first line of the verse, may suggest this. But on the other hand it is most unlikely that the *nāyikā* or her messenger would give such an answer, or that the *nāyaka* would ask them such a question. Hence the question–answer form has not been adopted in the translation. Other commentators too (like Dr Deśarājasingha Bhāṭi and Śrī Rākeśa—BBB, p. 405; BSR, p. 507) do not explain the verse in this way.

224. The *Gāthāsaptasatī* has a thought much on the same lines:

After love-making  
the ignorant  
newly-wed,  
wondering how her breasts  
came to be scratched,  
tries to wipe off the mark,  
washit  
and rub it off!

## Another Woman

226. The verse is about a married woman. Someone tells her that her husband has made love to another girl. She readily believes it and starts sulking. Her companion hastens to reassure her. There can be two interpretations to the words of the girl’s companion, of which the first one seems more likely.

(i) You are far lovelier than the girl who you suspect is carrying on an affair with your husband. Your beauty is like that of the rose bud, while she is like the bud of a *madāra* (the swallow wort plant) which is not at all attractive. So how can you expect him to prefer her to you?

(ii) A black bee never hovers round the bud of a *madāra* plant. In the same way your husband cannot abandon propriety and make love to any woman other than his wife.

*pātarī kāna ki* would be equivalent to the Hindi idiom *kāṇa ki kaccl*, meaning 'accepting without question', i.e. 'overcredulous'.

227. The woman who says these words is what Hindi poets call a *praurādhitrā khaṇḍitā nāyikā*, i.e. a woman who, even though being married, has a lover. Here the woman, who is an expert in love-making herself, is quick to discern the tell-tale signs of the *nāyaka*'s having dallied with another woman. The *nāyaka*'s mistress has brushed his eyebrows with lips stained with red betel-juice and so left red spots on them. He has kissed her on the eyes and got smudges of lamp-black on his lips. Red lacquer dye is applied by Indian women to their feet in order to beautify them. The *nāyaka* has beseeched his mistress to let him make love by falling on her feet, and that's how he has got red stains on his forehead. In the *Kāma Sūtra*, Vātsyāyana advises the lover to do this if every other thing fails to persuade a girl for love-making, 'for' he says 'it is a universal rule that however bashful or angry a woman may be, she will never disregard a man's kneeling at her feet.' (KS, p. 72)

230. The *nāyaka* has stained his forehead by falling at the feet of the woman begging her to let him make love. (see note to verse 227)

231. The *nāyikā* has sent her messenger, obviously a beautiful girl, to call her lover. But the *nāyaka* finds the girl so irresistible that he thinks it a better idea to make love to her instead. In the intensity of his passion while love-making he bites her cheeks. The marks are noticed by the *nāyikā* and she taunts the messenger with these words.

*tarivana* or *karnaphūla* (*karna*=ears, *phūla*=flower) is, as the name denotes, a flower-shaped ornament worn by Indian women on the lobes of the ears. It is of gold with jewels set in it and has a screw-like pin which passes through the hole in the ear and is screwed on to a small round conical piece behind.

Some commentators interpret the verse as being spoken by the *nāyikā*'s companion to her, praising the beauty of her ear ornament: 'O dear friend, your lover got so entangled between your golden ornament and your cheek's luster and teeth's glimmer, that he lost his senses and his gaze was unable to reach your charming face.' But the words used in the verse, *caukā cinha* ('teeth marks') clearly indicate the love-bites on the messenger's cheeks. Vātsyāyana mentions such teeth marks inflicted during love-making: 'All the places that can be kissed are also places that can be bitten, except the upper lip, the interior of the mouth, and the eyes.' (KS, p. 42) A Sanskrit poet, Māgha, says:

Well may you hide her scratches with your cloak  
and cover with your hand the bitten lips;

but how suppress the perfume that fills all the four directions  
accusing you of adultery.

(SPI, p. 162)

*kapol-duti* (lustre of the cheeks)—Hindi poets describe a beautiful woman's cheek as being 'bright and lustrous'. The women of Sthanavicāra, for example, described by Bāṇa had such bright cheeks that they 'gave perpetual sunshine'. (*Harṣacarita*, translated by M.R. Kāle)

232. For co-wives, see note to verse 475. A similar thought is expressed in the *Vikrama-Satasai*:

Are you not ashamed, lover,  
to take back your heart  
which you had given me,  
to give it to another?

233. Kāmadeva or Kāma, is the Hindu god of love. (see note to verse 463) He does not use a catapult but shoots flower-tipped arrows from his bow whose bowstring is a line of bees. Here he seems to undertake the comparatively clumsier task of using a catapult to force the unfaithful lover back to his beloved! The lines should not be understood, however, as meaning that Kāmadeva really lets off a volley of stones from a catapult. What the poet means is that as someone may shower stones from a catapult and so confound a wild elephant, and cause him to turn around, so Kāma influences the mind of the faithless lover and brings him back to his beloved. The comparison has been brought in because (i) the marks made by small stones discharged from a catapult would be about the same shape as those made on the *nāyaka's* bosom with the pearls of the woman's necklace, (ii) an elephant keeps roaming about the forest unrestrainedly and the *nāyaka* too seems to have no restraint on his lust.

234. For *caukā* see note to verse 231.

235. Commentators have two different explanations for this verse. Ratnākara and others believe it to be spoken by the *nāyikā's* woman friend who is eager to prevent any misunderstanding between the lovers. When the *nāyaka* comes home with red betel-juice marks showing on his cheeks, where the woman whom he has been secretly making love to, has kissed him, the *nāyikā* gets annoyed. Her friend speaks these words to her in an attempt to remove her suspicion. At the same time she throws a hint to the *nāyaka*, as much as to say, 'Don't be a fool. Go and wash away the tell-tale signs of love-making from your cheeks.'



On the contrary some commentators think the *nāyaka* is not at fault. It is really the flash of rubies in his ear ornaments falling on his cheek which make them seem reddish (men also wore such ornaments). The *nāyikā* is needlessly suspicious, and in her jealousy mistakes the reflection as streaks of red, which she thinks have been caused by another woman's betel-juice-stained lips. Her companion removes this unfounded suspicion. Yet other commentators think the reflection falling on the *nāyaka*'s cheeks is not that of the rubies in *his* ornament but of the ornament worn by the *nāyikā* who is sitting near him.

Ratnākara's interpretation seems more likely. If the lovers had been together all the time (and the *nāyaka* would not have come from outside) the question of the *nāyikā*'s suspecting him could just not arise. If at all she thought the streaks on his cheeks were marks of betel-stained lips, it would be *her* lips, not those of another woman. As for the question whose ear ornament it is, more likely it is the *nāyaka*'s. The ruby could then have shone against his cheeks (the two—the gem and his cheeks) being close together. It would be difficult to imagine the rubies being reflected on his cheeks from some distance. Indeed this could be possible only if the lovers were sitting in a close embrace. Bihārī's verse clearly shows that the *nāyikā* is angry, and surely an angry woman could not be sitting with her arms around her lover!

239. The polygamous *nāyaka* and his wives are diverting themselves with 'water sport', a favourite pastime those days. When women sported in the water they were often joined by their husband or lover, and they playfully splashed water on each other amusing themselves in a tank or a pond in various ways. The sport provided a good opportunity for flirting, and the women in the process showed off their bodies.

240. A *nāyaka* who brazenly deceives his girl by making love to another woman, and then cunningly tries to hide his wrongdoing, is called a *śaṭh nāyaka*. The man described in the verse is one of this kind. The *nāyikā* is a *khaṇḍitā*. Such a woman is greatly grieved when she notices marks of love-making made on the limbs of her lover by some other sweetheart of his. The *nāyikā* wittily pays back her faithless lover in his own coin!

244. Probably the lover here is Kṛṣṇa, though the verse does not specifically say so. Kṛṣṇa (which literally means 'dark') is often represented with a bluish hue. Hence the comparison here with water in a sapphire bowl. In describing the art of love-making, Hindu classics on erotics mention the making of nail marks by the lover. (KS, p. 39; AR, p. 221)

Some commentators, like Bhagawāna Dīna, think the couplet signifies that the *nāyaka* had made love to the woman with her on the top (BBL, p. 167). But the nail marks could have very much been made on his body even if he had been on top and his mistress below.

245. The *nāyaka* has two wives, the *nāyikā* who speaks the words, and another, her co-wife. The *nāyaka* has arranged to be with them by turns. When the turn of the co-wife comes, he goes instead to another woman with whom perhaps he has been carrying on an affair for some time (and whom he is likely to wed also in the near future). When the *nāyikā* learns about this, she is swayed by contrary emotions. These are explained as follows:

She feels glad because her husband has slighted the co-wife, of whom she is jealous, but sorrowful because when (as she anticipates) the *nāyaka* marries the woman he has been having an affair with, there'll be another co-wife who'll become a formidable rival. If the *nāyaka* did not go to the co-wife, why didn't he come to me, instead of going to his secret beloved? This thought makes her angry. She is amused because the *nāyaka* did not consider her co-wife worthy enough to have company with. She is pleased to think that the *nāyaka* never gives *her* a go by, and always comes to her when it is her turn. The *nāyikā's* vexedness is because she feels that now that the *nāyaka* has found a new girl, he may in preference to his girl, give her a miss too when *her* turn comes.

249. Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna has given an alternative interpretation reading the words *jau guahi tau* ('if you consider me at fault') as *jyaum gunahi tyaurh* ('as a wrongdoer would be imprisoned'). This is as follows: 'One cannot achieve salvation by a million deceitful words. Only by keeping the image of the god for ever in one's eyes as securely as a goaled wrongdoer is kept in prison, can one get it.' (BBL, p. 125)

However, since Bihārī is primarily a poet of love, it seems it was not his intention in this verse to convey a kind of spiritual message. The other interpretation which seems more likely, has been adopted in the translation.

250. *dacchina piya*, literally '*dakṣiṇa* lover', is a *nāyaka* who has many co-wives, but has vowed to give his affection to all equally. Our *nāyaka* is one of this sort, but apparently he has found a mistress next door with whom he is so infatuated that he doesn't ever make love to any of his co-wives.

Ratnākara thinks the words of the couplet are spoken by a woman messenger to the *nāyikā* and interprets them thus: 'That young man who was hitherto enamoured of other women, has now abandoned them, and cares only for you. If he remains away from you even for a day it seems like a year to

him.’ (BSR, p. 217) Bhagawāna Dīna has other interpretations. In one he takes *dakṣa* to mean ‘clever’, and believes the faithless *nāyaka* has only one wife, not many. The woman messenger tells him: ‘O clever youth, being entangled with a wicked woman, you have abandoned your rightfully wedded wife. Have you forgotten your marriage vows? See, your wife is so grieved by your being away that a day seems like a year to her!’ His other interpretation is that the faithless youth gives preference to one of his co-wives as against the other. A companion of one of the neglected wives tells him ‘O youth, though you have vowed to give equal attention to all your co-wives, you neglect the straightforward and good natured ones and bestow all your love on the one who is a rogue! The others feel your absence so much that each day seems like a year to them.’ (BBL, p. 196)

Though these interpretations can also be accepted, the one most likely has been adopted in the translation. The meaning of *bāsari* is ‘a house’ or ‘the wall of a house’. A *ghar* (house) is also known as *bākhar* in Indian villages. This fits in most with the interpretation adopted.

251. The verse has been taken by some commentators just to convey the sense that things (or persons) of one kind go with each other, like betel-juice with lips, both being red, and lamp-black with eyes, both black. But this interpretation would be too facile. The other one seems more likely, viz. that the *nāyaka* has been making love to another woman, whom he has kissed on the eyes (hence the lamp-black on them), and by whom he has been kissed (hence the red betel-stains on his eyebrows). This interpretation follows that of Dr Deśarājasingha Bhāṭṭa. (BBB, pp. 184–5)

The last three lines of the verse (as given in the translation) are to be taken as implied.

252. The word *syāma* indicates that the lover here referred to is Kṛṣṇa (*Śyāma* is another name for him).

A *hammām* (a word of Arabic origin) is a public bathing place which is kept heated to give a hot bath which cleans up all the pores of the body, removes tiredness, and gives the bather a tingling sense of well-being.

*traya tāpa* means ‘the three kinds of warmth’ (*traya*=‘three’, *tāpa*=‘heat’). Here it signifies the girl’s heat of passion, heat of the desire of her expectation, and the heat of her separation (i.e. the longing caused by being parted from her lover for a long time).

Some commentators have a spiritual explanation for the verse. According to them it refers to a devotee of Kṛṣṇa who is bearing the three kinds of sorrows

(*traya tāpa* meaning in this sense the triple sorrows of the body ailments, those of divine agency like misfortunes, deaths etc., and those caused by nature, for example, natural calamities, cyclones, earthquakes and the like). The devotee bears these sorrows in the hope that the god, Kṛṣṇa, will take pity on him and come to give him salvation. In this sense the verse would mean: 'I have harboured the three kinds of sorrows in my heart (as one would prepare a *hammām*) in the hope that (like a bather is tempted to come to a *hammām* to get comfort), Kṛṣṇa may one day come and redeem me.'

The greater probability is that the poet did not mean to introduce a spiritual element, for the words of the couplet clearly have an erotic import.

256. *bhau pyārau prītam tiyan manau calat pardesa*—When a woman knows that her husband will soon be leaving her and going away on a long journey, she becomes all the more affectionate towards him. The co-wives realize that now that the newly-wed girl has blossomed into youth, their husband will always be with her, and will hardly pay them any attention. So for them it is like as if he were away on a voyage!

257. Viṣṇu, one of the gods of the Hindu Trinity, is believed to be the Preserver of the Universe. Lakṣmī is his consort. Śiva is another of the gods of the Trinity, who is the Destroyer (the third, Brahmā, being Creator). Śiva is represented as bearing the crescent moon on his forehead. The words of the *nāyikā* in this couplet should be taken as spoken in a sarcastic sense. The fact that the *nāyaka*'s mistress has scratched his forehead with her nails in the fervour of passion, shows she is not adept enough in the art of love-making. An experienced woman would have scratched his bosom instead of the brow, though according to some erotic writers the brow is not forbidden. Vātsyāyana says: 'The places that are to be pressed with the nails are as follows: the arm pit, the throat, the breasts, the *jaghana*, or middle parts of the body, and the thighs.' But he adds, 'Suvarnanabha is of the opinion that when the impetuosity of passion is excessive, then the places need not be considered.' (KS, p. 39)

258. Tīja is celebrated as a festive day by Hindu women in honour of Pārvatī, daughter of Himāvata (the Himalayas), who, by her severe austerities, won Lord Śiva as her husband. Married women celebrate the Tīja festival for the well-being of their husbands.

Here the co-wives of the *nāyikā* have become jealous of her because even though they have worn fine dresses and ornaments, and she continues to wear a dirty sari, she outshines them in loveliness. Secondly, the *nāyikā*'s sari is rumpled and soiled with her husband's perspiration because he has been

making love to her the whole night, and she is too tired to change her dress or adorn herself. Finally, the *nāyikā*'s reluctance to change the sari soiled with her husband's perspiration shows that she wishes to continue wearing it in order to keep the fond memory of their love-making. This demonstrates the affection of the *nāyikā* for her husband, and the co-wives regretfully realize that it is she who is his favourite.

261. Commentators have given different interpretations to this verse. According to Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna it is an observation by the *nāyikā*'s companion on the deep love of the *nāyikā* for the *nāyaka*. She says: 'The ruby necklace on her bosom makes it seem that the love she bears for him has overflowed her heart and spilled outside.' (BBL, p. 58) Another commentator, taking the verse to be about the *nāyaka*'s illicit love-making, thinks that he has not forgotten to take off the necklace, and that the beads in it have merely left marks on his bosom because of his having embraced his mistress too tight. (BSR, pp. 273–4) The commentator says it can be imagined that if the *nāyaka* had exchanged clothes and ornaments with his girl to take the woman's role, he would forget to hand back her necklace after having made love. But *chalakat bāhir* 'spills out', shows that it is a red ruby necklace. Besides, however hard the *nāyaka* embraced his mistress, the necklace couldn't have left marks which remained for so long. And, if it did come in the way of love-making then it would have been the most natural thing to discard it. Incidentally, according to Hindi poetic convention, which assigns various colours to emotions, love is believed to have a red hue.

266. *harā hara-hāru* means 'the garland of Lord Śiva'. Śiva, the Destroyer and one of the gods of the Hindu Trinity, is represented as having a serpent coiled round his neck. In other words the expression means 'a serpent'.

268. *sūran* is a kind of edible tuber. It tastes good when properly salted and cooked in oil, but if it is not cooked to perfection it causes the throat to itch and is difficult to eat.

The *nāyaka* has been making love to another woman and is trying to conceal his infidelity by lying to her. The couplet contains the *nāyikā*'s reaction to his dissembling words.

271. *Nirguna mālā* means literally 'stringless beads'. The beads can't, of course, be held together without a string, but when the lovers clasp each other tight, it is only the beads which leave an impression on the *nāyaka*'s bosom, not the string. Hence the poet calls them marks of 'stringless beads'.

273. The girl whose lover has gone away is a *madhyā nāyikā*. Such a girl is young, shy and comparatively inexperienced in love-making. She feels the absence of her lover and desires him back, but is not much grieved because of her weak sexual longing and soon gets used to it. On the contrary the young girl's neighbour, who is her sweetheart's secret love, is a *prauthā nāyikā*. A *prauthā* is brazenly wanton. So her lover's absence torments her much more than it would a *madhyā*.

The young girl's happiness in seeing her woman neighbour more tormented than herself may be due to jealousy. Or may be because she is glad that the woman—whom she now knows to be her sweetheart's mistress—being more attractive, will persuade the *nāyaka* to come back soon. She herself is reluctant to convey her longing to him, being of a bashful type. Yet a third reason for her happiness may be that she knows she'll soon accustom herself to her lover's absence, but her neighbour will be suffering with grief every moment!

Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna comments on the couplet's singular charm and considers it to be unique in Hindi love poetry because, firstly, it expresses the feelings of two opposite types of *nāyikās* in the same verse and, secondly, it is a happy combination of the sentiments of humour and love (*hāsya* and *śṛṅgāra*).

278. In this verse Bihārī has used the names of a number of flowers with great ingenuity, some of them in a double sense. These are as follows:

- (i) *apaṭaiyata* (also called *iśkapericā*), is a variety of jasmine. The word also means 'to cling to'.
- (ii) *mo garaiṇ* means 'my neck', while *mogarā* (or *mugarā*) is also the name of a flower—another variety of jasmine with fragrant yellow flowers.
- (iii) *so na ju hī* means 'I am not that (girl)'. If the words are read as one, it would be *sonajuhi*, the name of yet another kind of jasmine with fragrant yellow flowers.
- (iv) *campaka* or *campā*, to which the complexion of the *nāyaka*'s mistress is compared, is a lovely evergreen tree, five to six metres in height, with fine foliage. It yields in April delicately fragrant yellow flowers with single axils of leaves.
- (v) *gullālā*, to which the *nāyaka*'s red sleep-starved eyes are compared, is a flower of deep red colour.

282. The translation follows Ratnākara's version. There are slight variations in those of others. Dr Deśarājasingha Bhāṭī and Śrī Rākeśa read *cit sakucat* (or

*sakucit*) *kat lāl* instead of *kat sakucāvat lāl*, and interpret 'Lover, if you really love these girls (with whom you get infatuated), why do you feel ashamed when someone speaks about them?' (BBL, p. 338 and BSR, p. 421) Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna, who also reads the controversial words as *kat sakucāvat*, considers the couplet to be spoken by the *nāyikā* to her faithless lover. She says 'Your false amours will make my companions feel that I do not really love you and so you are forced to go to other girls, or that I am inexperienced in the art of love. This will put me to shame in their eyes.' (BBL, p. 176)

284. *darakat nāhinh* means 'it does not crack or break open' (referring to the pomegranate). When pomegranates are about to get ripe on the tree, they are covered with a cloth-bag tied round them. This is to protect them from birds etc., and also to speed up the ripening process. But quite often the warmth of the sun heats up the cloth jacket so much that the pomegranate inside becomes over-ripe and cracks.

*guna* or *guṇa* usually means 'good qualities' or 'merit'. Here it is used sarcastically in a bad sense to mean 'faults' or 'vices'.

288. *guthal* is a flower with large petals and a long stamen, often of a red or a white colour. According to popular superstition if it is grown in the garden or placed in a vase in the house it causes strife in the family.

The *nāyikā*'s companion very cleverly compares the *nāyikā*'s sulking to a permanent guest. A guest normally comes for a short while only. Just so, sulking should be short-lived. But the *nāyikā* has kept on feigning indifference for too long. Her companion subtly hints to the *nāyaka* that he should now apologize for his fault and make up with the *nāyikā*.

291. The words *saina na bhajai* have been variously interpreted by commentators. Some, like Dr Deśarājasingha Bhāṭṭ and Śrī Rākeśa, believe it means 'staring fixedly' (BBB, p. 373; BSR, p. 470). Others, like Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna, Lallūji 'Lāl' and Devendra Śarmā 'Indra', think the expression means 'does not get on the bed'. (BBL, p. 179; BSL, p. 87; BSS, p. 298); The translation follows the latter interpretation. The meaning of *saina* has been given by Dr Śakuntalā Pāncāla as 'lying on the bed' (BBP, p. 326), and so *saina na bhajai* should signify 'refuses to get on the bed'. Śrī Rākeśa has given two reasons for not accepting this interpretation, (i) That it's not possible for the mark to be distinguished on the bedsheet, and (ii) How can it be supposed that the *nāyaka* has made love to another girl in the *nāyikā*'s own house, without her knowledge? A braid mark however, can be quite easily noticed on a bedsheet which has been slept upon. It would be rumpled at that

particular place. As regards the second point, the woman may have been made love to in the *nāyaka*'s house (not in that of the *nāyikā*). It was quite usual for a girl's messenger or a go-between to bring her to her lover's house (see verse 613). The profligate lover here has forgotten to take the simple precaution of changing the bedsheet!

296. Ratnākara's interpretation is a little different. According to him the woman at whose feet the *nāyaka* fell to implore her for love-making, is sore about his having spoilt the pattern of the red lacquer dye on her feet (the dye must have been still wet). So she has her revenge by playfully kissing him on the eyes so that his eyebrows may get stained in red!

Ratnākara's interpretation is certainly imaginative, but it is unlikely that Bihārī meant the verse to convey this. In other couplets too the poet has described the crimson eyes of a lover who has been making love all night, and this one is probably in that sense. Some commentators, as for example Dr Deśarājasingha Bhāṭṭa, would have it that the red streaks on the *nāyaka*'s eyes are because of his girl having kissed them with her betel-juice-stained lips (BBB, p. 385). But in that case it would be the eyebrows, for even if it supposed the girl was so clumsy as to leave betel stains on her lover's eyes, he would have immediately washed them off. Betel-juice in the eyes would certainly make them smart! The translation, therefore, follows Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna's version (BBL, p. 178), which appears to be more rational.

298. Ratnākara gives a different interpretation to the verse. According to him the words are spoken by a wise person and refer to a wealthy man, or to an ill-advised king, or to an ignorant or impotent person: 'However greatly distinguished I become, I can't rise in the estimation of the king who does not prize persons of merit. My good qualities might increase, like hair which keeps on growing, but his appreciation won't, as the eyes can't be made larger than they are.' (BSR, p. 505). Or it may be a woman with a similar complaint, viz. that however attractive she makes herself, it can hardly make any difference to her lover who, being impotent, can't give her any enjoyment.

These interpretations, however, appear to be too fanciful, and the simpler and more obvious one followed by other commentators (including Bhagawāna Dīna, BBL, p. 117) has been adopted in the translation.

299. Different interpretations of the verse have been given. According to some commentators the words are meant to be spoken by the *nāyikā*, who has sent her woman messenger with a message for her lover, but the faithless lover has found the charming messenger to be good to make love to! Others take the



couplet to be meant for the *nāyikā* who has made love, but who tries to hide this from her companion. Then there are those (like Devendra Śarmā 'Indra') who believe that it is a description of the *nāyikā* given by her woman companion to the *nāyaka* to tempt him to make love to her while she is flushed with wine. (BSS, p. 291) Another commentator (Girijādatta Śukla) takes it just as a description of the woman's beauty heightened by her being drunk. Yet others, like Bhagawāna Dīna, think it is a description by the *nāyikā*'s companion of the *nāyaka*'s beauty, increased all the more by his being drunk with wine. (Dīna reads *mad chakī*, 'drunk with wine' for *madana kī* 'like that of Kāmadeva'. BBL, p. 155)

None of these versions, however, seem appropriate. Most commentators have used the word *madana* (meaning Madana or Kāmadeva, the Hindu god of love, famed for his beauty). So the drink aspect is ruled out. Besides, the 'body glistening with perspiration' can be explained by love-making rather than by inebriation. The comparison to Kāmadeva implies that the verse is meant for a man. If it was for the *nāyikā*, she would be likened to Ratī (Kāmadeva's wife) who is believed to be the epitome of beauty. Considering all these factors, the verse has been interpreted as a kind of taunt by the *nāyikā* to the *nāyaka*, when he comes home with signs of his nightlong, clandestine love-making.

303. *berindī* or *bindī* is the round beauty mark Indian girls put on their foreheads. It may be painted (usually red) or be just a dab of vermilion.

*ghanasyāma* (Ghanaśyāma) is another name for Kṛṣṇa.

## The Woman Offended

305. One commentator (Padmasiṅgha Śarmā) has given a novel interpretation. According to him the *nāyaka* repeats his fault knowingly because the first time he had taken the name of the other woman the *nāyikā* had got angry, and her anger itself lent her charm. Now he wants to see the same captivating expression on her face again, and so deliberately mentions her rival's name to make her jealous.

The theme of another woman whose affair with the *nāyaka* makes the *nāyikā* jealous, is often taken up by Hindi poets, and the *nāyaka* is shown as straying from the course of true love! In fact erotic writers seem to permit sexual relations with a woman other than one's wife. Gonikaputa says that sex with the wife of another man too may be indulged in, to accomplish some end, for

example gaining the favour of a woman's husband. According to Kalyāna Malla 'if a man is so madly in love with the wife of another that he feels he would die without having her, he may, in order to save his life, have sexual intercourse with her once, but never again!' Vātsyāyana too is of the same view. Paṇḍit Kokkoka has a similar remedy for a woman who cannot live without her lover. If such be the case, the lover may oblige her once so that her life may not be lost. But he should not keep on encouraging her!

307. *hahā*—means 'to beseech most humbly'. Dr Śakuntalā Pāncāla gives the meaning of *hahā* as follows: 'When one entreats another in the Braja country with the greatest of humility he uses the word *hahā* or *hāhā* in doing so.' As for example, '*hahā* dear friend, I touch your feet, please agree to this,' etc. The *nāyikā*'s companion speaks on her behalf of as well as for other friends of the girl who have been persuading her to make up with the *nāyaka*.

310. The *neem* is a tree found in India, about six to ten metres high, with glossy leaves and fragrant white flowers. It is believed to have medicinal qualities and people use its twigs for cleaning their tongues. It bears a small capsule-like fruit which is extremely bitter.

320. *sorṁṭha* is dry ginger which has a pungent taste. In the fields where it grows, sometimes by chance a hard root springs up which is sweet to taste, but if one of these is mixed with other bits of dry ginger, of which chutney is made, it tastes sweet but causes nausea and vomiting, because the sweet root is poisonous.

The *nāyaka* has come after love-making with another woman and the *nāyikā* is sulking. Her antagonism is perfectly justified. In fact it is the *nāyaka* who ought to be apologetic, but in a male-dominated society perhaps he thinks he has a right to keep a mistress!

327. *Māgh* (January–February), the eleventh month of the Hindu calendar, is one of the coldest months in India.

329. An arrow-cage (*sarapañjara*) was a big cage of arrows used in ancient times to imprison a heinous criminal. Spear-like arrowheads were fixed all around its walls. When the prisoner was caged in this, the sharp points would pierce him from all sides even if he moved a little. It was thus a sort of a torture chamber.

330. The translation follows Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna's version (BBL, p. 328), who reads the third word in the first line as *mana* meaning 'heart'. Other commentators read it as *muni* ('sage') and interpret the couplet as follows: 'Desire for love-making arises even in the hearts of sages in the rainy season,

and abandoning their penance they long to embrace women, as dark clouds eager to caress the earth. Therefore leave your sulking, dear lad, and go to your beloved.' (BSR, p. 379) Bhagawāna Dīna's interpretation seems to be simpler and preferable.

The Indian rainy season (that comes as a relief after the heat of summer) is delightful and invigorating and favourable to love-making. Besides, it is the season when, because of the pathways being flooded with rain, travel is not possible. So lovers remain together and enjoy themselves. In view of this it is unnecessary to bring in the sages too!

331. *Agahan* is the ninth month of the Hindu calendar corresponding to November–December. It is specially tempting to lovers because of the extreme cold, when they would like to lie cuddled up close together.

For Kāma see note to verse 463.

332. *mādhuri* is a Spanish jasmine which has a sweet fragrance.

Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna has an interesting comment on this verse. He says: 'The words can be taken to be an observation on spring by the poet himself; or of the *nāyikā*'s companion spoken to her (in which case it is to remove her feigned indifference); or of the *nāyaka* for the *nāyikā* (an expression of his longing for her); or spoken by the *nāyikā* to the *nāyaka* (in which case it is to prevent his going abroad by telling him how passion-stirring spring is). The verse would be in a suggestive sense if considered as spoken by the woman messenger to a wayfarer about to go on his journey, or if taken as a message for her lover given by the *nāyikā* to her messenger, and in a figurative sense if considered as spoken to a black bee by a woman conceited by her beauty. Thus the couplet is capable of many interpretations.' (BBL, p. 235)

333. A *jurāfā* is believed to be an animal inhabiting Africa. It always lives with its mate and if the two are separated, it dies.

344. Poet Amaru describes a similar situation:

Lying on the same bed  
their backs each to each  
not speaking or answering  
the lovers were eager to make up  
yet restrained by pride:  
but the moment they looked behind  
their sidelong glances met  
and laughing uproariously  
they fused in a tight embrace.

346. A *lauring* is a nose ornament worn by Indian women. It is a clove-shaped pin, usually of gold, and decks a hole which is made in the left nostril. It's called a *lauring* because that is also the word for 'clove'.

Cloves have a bitter taste. So the *nāyaka* tells the girl that the clove-shaped ornament of her nose gives him the feeling that she is showing bitterness towards him.

## Meeting

347. The verse can also be taken as meant for a gardener, interpreting *bārī* as meaning *osarī* or *pārī*, 'a ditch around a tree for watering it'. Then the meaning would be 'O gardener, water the plants in your garden and keep them from withering, for then they are sure to bear fruit.' (BBB, p. 32) But the entire implication of the verse would then be lost. So the alternative meaning which follows Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna's version (BBL, p. 183) has been adopted in the translation.

348. The *agastya* tree is a soft-wooded tree about twenty to thirty feet high, with pale green leaves. It flowers in early autumn, bearing white flowers tinged with red.

The *nāyikā* has promised to meet her lover on the second night of the bright lunar fortnight, when the moon goes down, near a particular *agastya* tree. But she has forgotten about the assignation and fails to turn up. Her lover sends a messenger to see what holds her up. The messenger finds the girl sitting in the company of the village elders and so cannot openly convey the lover's message. She does it by overt hints as in the verse. The mention of the new moon and the *agastya* tree reminds the girl of the time and place of her meeting, and she hastens to meet her lover without any of the elders knowing about it.

Some critics, following the interpretation of Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna, have taken these lines to be spoken by the *nāyikā*'s companion to the *nāyaka* in praise of her friend's beauty, comparing the loveliness of her face to the new moon. (BBL, p. 246) But the wordings of the verse clearly show that the moon is likened to the lone *agastya* flower, not to the girl's face. The translation, therefore, follows the version of other commentators, like Deśarājasingha Bhāṭī and Śrī Rākeśa. (BBB, p. 75; BSR, p. 84)

The lone blossom on the *agastya* tree recalls Wordsworth's lines:

Fair as a star, when only one  
Is shining in the sky.

349. Poet Keśavadāsa speaks of four kinds of meeting—in person, by seeing the portrait of the beloved, hearing her voice, and finally seeing her in a dream (*Rasikapriyā*, chapter 4). Another Hindi poet says much in Bihārī's manner:

Heavy with sleep, my eyes closed  
and in a moment my lover came in a dream;  
but as I made to clasp him, I awoke,  
and he was no longer there.  
Other women, friend,  
miss the bliss of love-making by remaining asleep,  
I missed it alas, by waking!

350. *mālātī* is a dense creeper which yields fragrant flowers. The *tamāla* is a tall sturdy evergreen tree which grows on hillsides, and in some places along the banks of the Yamunā river.

The *nāyikā* has wisely chosen the *mālātī* bower as the meeting place. It is unfrequented (or else black bees would not swarm there), cool, inconspicuous and easy to locate. Women went to the riverside usually to fetch water, so her going is not likely to attract any undue attention. Besides, the branches of the fragrant *mālātī* creepers twining round the *tamāla* tree-trunks provide an ideal setting for making love.

Some commentators, like Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna, have taken the verse merely to signify that the *nāyaka* should seek the shade of the *mālātī* bower mainly to avoid the sun's heat. (BBL, p. 156) But surely, the *nāyikā* would not date her lover merely to give him relief from the sun!

351. It is usual for lovers in the villages to meet secretly in fields, particularly in those in which the plants grow high and dense. The *nāyikā*, who is secretly meeting a lover is worried because most of the crops have been harvested, and there is no place where she can meet her lover unseen. Her confidante reminds her that the *arahar* crop is still unharvested. *Arahar* is a cereal crop which grows a little above a man's height, with dense green leaves, and so provides excellent cover. Hemp and sugarcane are usually harvested in winter by about November, and cotton by March–April. But *arahar*, which is sown in July–August, is harvested in June (the Indian summer end). Therefore, it is the last to be cut.

352. There are three pickings of cotton, the first in *Kuār* (September–October), the second in *Agahan* (November–December) and finally in *Caitra* (March–April), after which it is cut and the fields lay bare. The girl who is picking cotton in the field for the last time (i.e. March–April) bemoans that after the cotton has

been harvested, the plants will be cut away leaving her no cover to meet her lover as she used to before. (see note to verse 351 *ante*)

Some commentators interpret *sāim* as meaning the girl's husband, but here it would better fit in as signifying the grief felt by the girl.

353. A *kos* is two miles.

354. By placing her hand on her bosom and then on her head the *nāyikā* conveys the following message:

(i) You are enshrined in my heart. I'll certainly meet you as you want me to. The Hindi expression *śirodharya hai* (*sir*='the head', *dhār*='to be held by') means 'worthy of respect'. Hence the girl's putting her hand on her bosom and then on her head signifies 'I respect what you (seated in my heart) say'.

(ii) I swear by the Lord Śiva I will meet you at midnight.

(iii) I will meet you on the third night of the dark fortnight in the arbour between the two hills.

(iv) I'll meet you in the Śiva temple on the Yamunā bank.

(v) I'll not forget my promise to meet you, but I'll meet you after sunset.

356. *Aświn* or *Kuār* is one of the months of the Hindu calendar corresponding to September–October. The night of full moon in that month is the *śārada pūrṇimā* night (*śārada*='early winter', *pūrṇimā*='the full moon'). The moon then shines with the greatest brilliance. According to popular belief amongst Hindus it rains nectar then!

The *nāyikā* has a date with her lover but it has apparently slipped her mind. When she does not come, her lover sends a messenger to remind her. The messenger cleverly does so by pointing out to the loveliness of the full moon, thereby hinting at the rendezvous where she has agreed to meet her lover.

Some commentators, like Bhagawāna Dīna and Dr Deśarājasingha Bhāṭṭ, interpret the couplet differently: 'When *śārada*'s full moon is in the sky, girls will of themselves be filled with longing and be impelled to go to their lovers. Then, of course, dear girl, you can't help shaking off your arrogance and meeting him. So why not win his love by doing so now, of your own free will?' (BBL, p. 136; BBB, pp. 161–2) But the words *karatī na kyauṁ cit ceta* in the first line, meaning 'why don't you remember?' clearly indicate that the messenger is trying to remind the *nāyikā* of something. So the alternative interpretation does not quite fit the context. The translation follows the interpretation which has been adopted amongst others by Śrī Rākeśa. (BSR, p. 197)

361. The translation follows the interpretation of Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna. (BBL, p. 238) Some commentators, however, do not introduce the romantic element

and take the couplet merely to be a description of the intense darkness created by the thick clouds. But Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna's version is more in keeping with the spirit of the *śṛṅgāra* rasa poetry, and hence has been preferred.

Some critics blame Bihārī for being inaccurate in mentioning the ruddy goose in the rainy season. This bird, they say, does not appear in the rains at all. The argument is a hair-splitting one, because even though the bird hibernates elsewhere in the rainy season, it was customary for bird lovers to keep caged ruddy geese, or tame them. Quite possibly they wandered about in the gardens of royal courts. Another objection taken is that the words used are *lakhi cakāṭ cakavāna*, i.e. 'seeing the male and female ruddy goose together as well as separated'. How can the birds be seen at all in the darkness? Bhagawāna Dīna explains this by taking the word *lakhi* to mean 'understand' or 'give attention to'. It is believed that the pair get separated in the night and call each other in a characteristic plaintive voice. So any one who listens carefully to the ruddy goose calling out to his mate can detect the plaintiveness in the voice, thus realizing that the two are separated. Also, since they are apart in the night only, he can know by the bird's call that it is night time.

362. *campā* is a fragrant yellow flower (see note to verse 278), often threaded into garlands.

## Separation

370. 'Gust-shaped talks'. When the *nāyikā*'s companions begin to talk about her lover who has gone abroad, the separated girl is comforted. Such talks are likened to gusts of winds which bring relief to the girl tormented by parting from her lover.

A Sanskrit poet, Amaru, says about a parted woman:

The moon seems hot,  
sandalwood paste burns her;  
each night seems a thousand years  
and the lotus garland  
is like an iron chain!

373. Poet Rasanidhi also uses the simile of the kite. His *nāyikā* says, 'My mind keeps flying like a kite, the string of which is in my lover's hands.'

378. This verse does not find place in the collection of Lālā Bhagawana Dīna. The allusion is to the *Rāmāyaṇa* in which the story of Rāma is told. His wife, Sītā,

was taken away by Rāvaṇa, the ten-headed demon-king of Lāṅkā, and was captive there till Rāma rescued her after a fierce fight in which Rāvaṇa was killed. According to mythology, Rāma, who was an incarnation of Viṣṇu, had put the real Sītā in charge of the fire god, Agni, when he realized she would be carried away by Rāvaṇa, and had created her shadow. When this 'shadow'-Sītā was rescued from the demon-king, she was cast into the fire, and the real Sītā handed back by Agni, to whose charge she had been given. Thus it was not, as most believe, that Sītā was 'purified' by the fire, but that it was the ever pure Sītā being handed back to Rāma by the fire god. Maybe that's why Bhagawāna Dīna omits this verse.

379. In Bihārī's days thugs would tempt a child with a piece of *gut* (unrefined sugar) and take him away to some distance from his home. They would then rob him of his jewellery (which children customarily wore).

380. *Causara* has been taken by some commentators to mean a heavy garland of flowers or pearls. But it seems more likely Bihārī meant a particular kind of four-stringed flower garland, which women of those days wore to keep cool. Dr S.S. Pāncāla also gives this meaning in *Bihārī Śabda-Kośa*. (BBP, p. 196)

382. A *ghuṁghaci* is the seed of a type of creeper. It is a small, hard, oval seed of brilliant red colour with a tiny black spot on it and a white dot inside the black. Attractive in appearance it can be threaded into a garland. The *nāyaka* places the garland 'laughingly' around the *nāyikā*'s neck because it is a mere trifle, but all the same it must have looked nice on the beautiful woman! She treasures it as a gift from one whom she greatly loves.

Bihārī very subtly and appropriately refers to the *ghuṁghaci* garland. The seed of this is also used to preserve camphor. If some of the *ghuṁghaci* seeds are placed in a container of camphor then the camphor will not easily evaporate and is preserved. Thus the garland of *ghuṁghacis* on the *nāyikā*'s bosom keeps her camphor-like soul from going away.

383. Some commentators take the words to be meant for the separated *nāyaka*. But this seems unlikely as the parted girl is more the subject of Bihārī's love poetry than the separated lover.

384. Here the dual aspect of Kṛṣṇa is pointed out—as a lover and as an incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu. He is the woman's lover as well as the protector of her life, so the *nāyikā*'s friend says, 'Apart from hastening to your beloved and removing the sorrow of her separation, you have a duty as lord and preserver of life to save her from death.' Death is said to be a blessing in the sense that it



will remove the extreme suffering of the parted girl, which has become unbearable now. Compare Shakespeare's:

Fly away, fly away breath;

I am slain by a fair cruel maid.

(*Twelfth Night*: II.iv.54–5)

386. *barī* can mean both 'burning' and 'raving'. Some commentators, like Ratnākara, interpret it as 'burning', implying that the girl burns in the grief of separation. But the *juru* or *jara* in the next line, meaning 'fever' would apply more to 'raving', for it is in high fever that one begins to rave. So *barī* has been taken to mean 'mumbling incoherently while in the high fever of separation'.

387. *sudarasana* has a double meaning here (i) a powder (*chūrma*) given as medicine to cure fever, (ii) *suṇḍara*+*daraśana* (*suṇḍara* meaning 'charming' and *daraśana* meaning 'presence') i.e. 'charming presence'. The verse shows Bihārī's acquaintance with the āyurvedic (Hindu) system of medicine.

391. *bali* or *balihārī* literally means 'I die for you'. There is no exact equivalent for this in English. The *nāyikā*'s confidante says to the *nāyaka* in a bantering sort of way 'dear lad, you are so dear to me that I can lay down my life for you, go and see to what state the *nāyikā* has been reduced through separation from you'.

The idea behind going on the quiet is that if the *nāyikā* comes to know of her lover's arrival, the great joy of meeting him will revive her and conceal her state of misery.

392. The *viṇā* is an Indian stringed instrument somewhat like the *sītār*. *Malhāra* is a tune in Indian music, which if played or sung expertly, is believed to cause rainfall. *Pūs* is one of the months of the Hindu calendar, corresponding to December–January, the height of the Indian winter. Journeying was almost impossible in the days in the rainy season (July–August) because there were very few roads, and the village pathways would be impassable. So people set out in winter (summer's heat made the journey difficult). Although it does rain a little in the winter in India, it is not so much as to be a hindrance for travel. The *nāyikā*, however, wonderfully makes the rain pour heavily in winter by playing the *malhāra* tune!

Poet Rasikeś has a similar idea. Describing what a woman does on learning that her husband has planned to go abroad in the *Pūs* month, he writes:

Hearing her friends say

her husband would go abroad in *Pūs*

that clever lady thought out a way.

She brought out her flute,  
and praying to god,  
played on it the *malhāra* tune.

393. Ratnākara has given a different interpretation. According to him the *nāyikā*, unable to bear the sorrow of separation, is dead, and the *nāyaka* is sorrowing over it. His confidant consoles him in these words: 'It was better for her to die than to bear the intense sorrow of her separation. By her dying at least the grief of one of you is no more, or else both of you would be plagued by it. You, being a man, will be able somehow to endure the shock of her death, but it would have been a torture for that tender girl to endure the sorrow of her separation.'

But perhaps Bihārī never intended to make his *nāyikā* die in this manner. It would be as though the heroine in a story died almost in the beginning! Besides, Bihārī's *Satasai* is mainly a work of love poetry, and so the atmosphere of gloom created by the *nāyikā*'s death would be out of place.

394. The translation follows Bhagawāna Dīna's interpretation which appears to be more appropriate than others who read *braja* for *jaga* in the couplet. According to them the concluding part of the verse means 'No one should venture out in Braja as the fire has spread throughout the city.'

The fire of separation is considered to be strange because normally a spark is caused by the striking of two hard things, as for example two stones, but here two soft things have caused it, viz. the eyes of the *nāyaka* and the *nāyikā*. Again the fire has its origin in one place, but it burns in another—the *nāyikā*'s heart, when usually a fire blazes only at the place where it is caused.

397. For Kāma see note to verse 463.

400. The *Gāthāsaptasatī* has a similar idea:

I have not been able to rearrange yet  
my braid's ruffled hair,  
and you are thinking of leaving again,  
O heartless lover!

402. The *nāyikā*'s lover has gone abroad. Even though there is no news of his coming, the heaving of her bosom and the flickering of her left eyelid make her believe that he might be arriving. So she hastily puts on a new dress to welcome him.

The flickering of a woman's left eyelid is considered to be a good omen. The changing of the dress has particular significance, for the *Kāma Sūtra* says

that during the absence of her husband a woman 'should wear only her auspicious ornaments' (KS, p. 90), and remain dressed in ordinary clothes. But it seems the *nāyikā* transgresses Vātsyāyana's directive about how to meet a husband on his homecoming, inasmuch as he says in *Kāma Sūtra*, 'And when her husband returns from his journey, she should receive him at first in her ordinary clothes, so that he may know in what way she has lived during his absence. . . .'

403. Hindu cosmogony believes the cosmic unit of time to be a *kalpa*, which is just a 'day' of Brahmā, the Creator. This 'day' is equivalent to 4,320 million years! (Reckoned in terms of the Christian year). Brahmā creates the universe in the morning of his 'day', and at 'night', heaven and hell as also the created world, all return to chaos.

The idea being that even the few minutes her lover takes in greeting his friends before coming to her, seem unending to the *nāyikā*—so great is her longing to unite with him.

404. To the girl parted from her lover, even the cool moonbeams seem like the sun's rays. The lady of one of Vākkūta's verses similarly addresses the moon complaining: 'Shoot not your fire-shooting rays, O moon.' (SPI, p. 179)

405. Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna has given an alternative interpretation also (reading the words *jau guahī tau*, 'if you consider me at fault' as *jyaunī gunahī tyaurī*, 'as a wrongdoer would be imprisoned'). This is as follows:

One cannot achieve salvation by a million deceitful words. Only by keeping the image of the god with form ever in one's eyes as securely as a gaoled wrongdoer can one get it. (BBL, p. 123)

However, since Bihārī is primarily a love poet, it seems it was not his intention in this verse to convey a spiritual message. The other interpretation which appears more likely has been adopted.

407. *khas* is the fragrant root of a grass which has a cooling effect. In Bihārī's days (and sometimes even now), curtains of *khas* were hung on windows and fixed on doors in the unbearably hot Indian summer months. The curtains were drenched with water and the hot winds blowing through them caused evaporation, thus cooling the room.

The winter month, *Māgh*, is the eleventh month of the Hindu calendar (corresponding to January–February) when it is exceedingly cold.

408. Commentators have given different interpretations for this verse. The translation follows Bhagawāna Dīna's version (BBL, p. 209). Others take the

couplet as being spoken by the *nāyikā*'s woman messenger to the *nāyaka* who has gone abroad. According to other commentators the *nāyaka* was in love with the *nāyikā*'s woman neighbour as well. The *nāyikā* came to know of their secret affair, and almost every day there would be a row. He had in fact gone away to escape from this unpleasant situation for some time. The *nāyikā*'s messenger comes to him and speaks to him of the *nāyikā*'s condition, but cleverly conveys to him also the grief of his other love, thus throwing him a hint that he should return at least for the other woman's sake.

Bhagawāna Dīna's interpretation seems to be the simplest and most direct, and has therefore been adopted. The others are too fanciful and stretch the point too far.

409. *tithi aum* or the *avam* lunar day. According to an astrologer's almanac, the lunar day is fixed in relation to the rising of the sun. If a particular *tithi* is fixed for a certain lunar day, that will subsist even though another *tithi* may actually begin a few hours after the rising of the sun on that day. And if on the day after that yet another *tithi* begins according to the almanac, that *tithi* will remain even if actually the previous one is still continuing. Thus the *tithi* which subsists from after the rising of the sun on the first day to the time the *tithi* (as in the almanac) of the second day starts, is as though it had no existence, because it is not counted as a *tithi* for either of the two days.

414. *Māgh* (January–February) is among the coldest months of the Indian winter. *lū* is hot scorching wind that blows in the day during the hottest month of the Indian summer (June).

419. The *jawāsa* is a thorny plant which grows on the banks of rivers. When the rain falls its stems and leaves shrivel up. The root, which is in the ground, however, gets firmer.

423. Draupadī, daughter of Drupada, king of Pāncāla was married to all the five Pāṇḍu princes. Of these the eldest, Yudhiṣṭhira, had a gambling match with his cousins, the Kauravas, in which he lost everything including Draupadī, whom he staked in the last bid. So she became a slave and Duryodhana asked her to sweep the room. On her refusal, Duhaśāsana dragged her by the hair before all the chieftains and insulted her. He even started pulling her sari to bare her and thus dishonour her in the assembly. But Kṛṣṇa came to her rescue and miraculously caused her sari to become more and more long. Duhaśāsana got tired of pulling folds after folds of the sari, for it seemed to have no end, and at last gave up in despair and shamefacedly went back to his seat. The incident is narrated in the famous Hindu epic, the *Mahābhārata*.

427. Duryodhana (literally 'hard to conquer') was the eldest son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and leader of the Kaurava princes in the great *Mahābhārata* war. Towards the end of the battle, on the eighteenth day, after his side had been utterly defeated by the Pāṇḍavas, he fled and hid himself in a lake, for he had the power of remaining under water without being affected by it in any manner. He was discovered after a great deal of difficulty and incited to come out through taunts and sarcasms to fight with Bhīma (one of the Pāṇḍava brothers). The incident is related in the *Mahābhārata*.

The idea of the analogy is that as Duryodhana hid in the waters, being untouched by it, so the *nāyikā*'s lover resides in her heart and yet is not moved by the grief caused by separation.

428. *āthauri jāma* means *āthorī pahara*. A *pahara* was the unit of time before clocks came to be used. There were eight *paharas* (*ātha*= 'eight') in the day and night of twenty-four hours, and each *pahara* was three hours. Hence *āthauri jāma* means all the twenty-four hours, i.e. 'day and night'.

430. *semhuta* is a kind of cactus (swallow wort). If letters are written on paper with the juice of the plant, they are invisible. But if a little heat is applied to the paper on which they are written, they get revealed and can be read.

433. For *lū* (hot winds) see note to verse 414. The Indian summer follows a brief spring.

Some commentators take the couplet to be just the poet's observation, not words spoken by the *nāyikā*'s companion to her. However, the import remains the same either way.

435. *maulasiri* (or *vakula*) is a beautiful tree with a thick spreading crown and dark green glossy leaves. In March it bears pale green fragrant flowers which are often threaded into garlands.

Commentators have given various interpretations to this verse. Mānasingha takes it to be meant for Rādhā. Others, like the writer of the *Rasacandrikā*, and Prabhudayāl Paṇḍeya, say that the garland itself seemed to be thrilled with love on contact with the *nāyikā*'s neck! Ratnākara would have it that the *nāyikā* appeared so splendid with the garland round her neck that it seemed she herself had become a lovely garland! But these interpretations seem too fanciful, and so the more obvious and direct one has been adopted in the translation.

437. *Caitra* or *Caita* is the first month of the Hindu calendar corresponding to March–April when it is neither too hot nor too cold and the nights are pleasant. The full moon of *Caitra* has an ethereal beauty.

438. The incident referred to is the lifting of Mount Goverdhana by Kṛṣṇa. It was customary to offer Indra, god of the firmament, sweets, rice, saffron, sandal and incense once in the year. When the cowherds were getting ready for this annual offering, Kṛṣṇa asked them to worship instead the Goverdhana hill, and promised that if they did so the spirit of the mount would show itself. He then assumed the form of the spirit and himself received the offerings. This enraged Indra, who ordered the clouds to rain in torrents for seven days and nights. Faced with the deluge the cowherds were terrified, but Kṛṣṇa calmly raised the hill, supporting it on his little finger, thus protecting them from the flood waters. Indra was baffled, and realizing Kṛṣṇa's supremacy, came down from the sky and offered his submission.

*pralaya*—Hindus reckon cosmic time in terms of *yugas* (ages), of which there are four, viz., Kṛta, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali (the one in which we are living). These *yugas* have a period of 12,000 celestial years (a celestial year being equal to 360 ordinary years). Thus the *yugas* extend to 4,320,000 years (called the period of *mahayuga* or *manwatara*). Two thousand *mahayugas* (or 8,640,000,000 years) make a *kalpa*. At the end of the *kalpa* the world is dissolved and then recreated. This dissolution is called *pralaya*.

Some commentators interpret the verse in a devotional light: 'When powerful Indra, out of wrath for being denied his customary worship, caused torrential rain which seemed to bring the world's destruction before its due time, Kṛṣṇa protected the milkmaids and the cowherds of Braja by lifting the Goverdhana mount.' Though this is a more direct interpretation, it appears to be too facile, as it would be a mere mention of one of Kṛṣṇa's many episodes. Besides in another verse (686) the poet has made a direct reference to the incident. He would hardly have two verses having an identical meaning.

The other interpretation which Bhagawāna Dīna and other commentators have adopted is more expressive and is in keeping with the spirit of Bihārī's love poetry, and so this has been preferred in the translation. (BBL, pp. 6-7)

442. *aragaja* is a kind of yellowish perfume made from sandalwood, saffron and camphor, which is applied by Indian women to their bodies. The *nāyaka*, who is abroad, has sent this perfume as a gift of love to the *nāyikā* through her companion.

443. Some commentators think the *nāyikā* has died due to the grief of separation and the parrot has memorized the pathetic words she spoke at the moment of her death. But this interpretation is both unnecessary and unlikely, for in Hindi love poetry the parted woman may become insensible, emaciated,

feverish and may approach death, but she never dies! In fact the *nāyaka*'s timely arrival has saved the *nāyikā* and all is well again. But her sorrowful words remain on the tame parrot's tongue as a reminder of the past agony of separation.

445. The words *utyau usās samtra* in the text signify an idiomatic expression in Hindi (*usās ke samtra se hridaya kā utanā*) meaning 'the heart soaring aloft on the wind of her sighs', in other words 'she's agitated'. A kite can't fly if singed or wet, but the parted woman's heart burnt by separation's fire and drenched by her tears, keeps aloft on the deep sighs of her sorrows.

446. Some commentators give a slightly different interpretation: 'Those who can bear the grief of separation from their sweethearts in this exciting rainy season and yet stay alive, are truly immortal!' The translation follows Bhagawāna Dīna's version. (BBL, p. 241) The word *amar* literally means 'immortal', but it would be too much of an exaggeration to say that a man would become immortal either if he had had the bliss of union with his loved one or if he had withstood the grief of separation from her. Hence the word has been translated as 'long life'.

452. Indian houses are built differently from those in the west. There is usually an inner courtyard and verandas with rooms opening in to them. After these, towards the front there may be other rooms and then a kind of parlour or roofless space, and finally a big door opening out to the lane or a street.

456. *nirāsa*=*nīra*+*aśan* (*nīra*='water' or 'rain'; *aśan*='he whose life depends on') means the Indian sparrow-hawk, a bird which according to poetic convention keeps alive by drinking only the raindrops which fall when the moon is in the fifteenth lunar mansion (the raindrops are believed to generate pearls). The *papīhā* or *cātak*, as the sparrow-hawk is popularly called, appears in the rains and, perched usually on the twig of a mango tree, calls aloud '*pi! pi!*' in a plaintive voice.

459. *kema kusuma* means the *kadamba* flower (*kusuma*='flower'). The *kadamba* tree has ovate-oblong glossy leaves with solitary bunches of flowers in a ball-like form at the end of its branchlets. The flowers are of a dull yellow colour and mildly fragrant, and appear at the beginning of the rainy season. The tree is associated with Kṛṣṇa.

460. Kṛṣṇa used to make love to Rādhā and to the milkmaid girls in Gokul—the scene of his early life, his favourite haunt being the bank of the river Yamunā. After killing the tyrant, Kāṁsa, Kṛṣṇa left Gokul and went to Mathurā, the place

of his birth. This cast a gloom over the milkmaids whom he had loved and who were deeply enamoured of him. One of them is bemoaning her sorrow in this verse.

The verse is somewhat unconventional inasmuch as here just those things give pleasure to the separated milkmaid, which pain a woman parted from her lover, viz. the shade of the thick woods and the gentle fragrant breeze. This is rather unusual in Hindi love poetry in which all pleasant things (even pleasant associations with the loved one) cause grief to the woman whose lover has gone away.

## Beauty

463. Kāma or Kāmadeva (*deva*=‘god’) is the Hindu god of love. He is lord of the *apsaras* (heavenly nymphs). His bow is of sugarcane and its bowstring is a line of bees. Each of the arrows he uses is tipped with a distinctive flower. He is shown as a handsome youth riding on a parrot. Nymphs attend to him, and one of them carries his banner—a fish (*maraka*) on a red background.

465. *khubhi* is an ear ornament shaped like a clove, worn by Indian women.

*Manamatha* is another name for Kāma. See note to verse 463 *ante*.

466. The girl is a *śuklābhisārikā* (*śukla*=‘light’, *abhisāra*=‘tryst’). Such a woman loves to dress in white and has a complexion ‘fair as the yellow lotus’. (AR, p. 114) As the name *śuklābhisārikā* suggests, such a girl goes to meet her lover on moonlit nights.

467. *sonajūhi* is a variety of jasmine yielding yellow flowers, and *mālati* is a dense climber which bears white, fragrant flowers.

468. Long eyes are taken by Hindi poets to be a mark of the adolescent girl. Girls would sometimes make a fine pencil mark outwards from the corners of their eyelids to make their eyes seem longer. Poet Vidyāpati writes of ‘eyes stretching to the ears to whisper the message of adolescence’.

469. There can be two interpretations. If the meaning of the word *jhīlami* is taken to be ‘glimmer’ the sense would be as conveyed in the verse translation. If it is taken to be ‘ear ornament’ it would be ‘Her ear ornament glitters bewitchingly from beneath her thin dress, as though a *kalpa* tree branch and the leaves on it were reflected in the waters of the sea’. The former interpretation has been preferred because the comparison to a branch of the *kalpa* tree would be more appropriate for the girl’s body than her small ornament. Unless the girl is beautiful, the glitter of her ornament would be of little account.



The *kalpa* tree (Wishing Tree) is believed to be a mythical tree growing in heaven, which fulfills all desires.

470. Thugs used to roam about the countryside in eighteenth century India. They would travel in the company of their victim for several days. Reaching a lonely spot, one amongst the gang would suddenly throw a rope or a cloth round the unsuspecting man's neck, and his accomplice would deftly catch the other end. The noose would be pulled tight while a third villain would seize the man and throw him on the ground, at the same time kicking him on some vital part. The noose tightened as the man fell. Resistance was impossible. The unfortunate victim would be robbed and his corpse thrown into some pit nearby.

*cilaka caurindha*—this is a poetic exaggeration. Starlight can hardly appear as bright as daylight. Here the poet imagines that the traveller, who is likened to the lovelorn *nāyaka*, suddenly wakes up in the bright starlight and mistaking it for daylight, resumes his journey. The thug (compared to the beauty of the girl) who is after him, finds this a good opportunity to put the noose (compared to the girl's smile) round his neck, and strangling him throws his body into a pit (here compared to the dimple on the *nāyikā*'s chin).

471. The first *urabasi* in this verse stands for Uravāśī, a celestial nymph (*apasarā*) mentioned in the *Rg-Veda*, who was so ravishing that at the very sight of her, Mitra (Ruler of the day) and Varuṇa (Ruler of the night), while engaged in performing a sacrifice, emitted their seed. She is said to have approached Arjuna, the Pāṇḍava warrior, and the *Mahābhārata* describes her as 'challenging in beauty the moon itself'. The other *urabasi* (also called a *hamela*) is a necklace of gold coins or gold discs threaded together.

473. It is believed that a black mark, usually of lamp-black, put on the cheek or forehead of a child or of a grown-up person, will act as a protection against the evil eye. Here the black mark has just the opposite effect!

474. It is customary for Indian women to call for the wife of a barber to apply red lacquer dye to their feet, because of the expertize with which she does it. The manner in which she does it is as follows: She soaks a small cotton plug thoroughly with a thick solution of the dye. This she moves along the foot, gently squeezing out the dye from it. Here the barber's wife finds the *nāyikā*'s heel so red that she mistakes it for the dye-soaked cotton and keeps on squeezing the heel itself!

475. A rich man of those days married several women, and it was natural that his co-wives were jealous of one another, particularly of the younger and the more attractive one, who became the husband's favourite. Poet Matirāma expresses a similar thought:

The more the breasts of that youthful maiden rise  
the more are lowered the humbled eyes of her co-wives!

476. According to Indian astrological belief when the planets Mars, Saturn and Moon are in the same House there is bound to be heavy rain. Further Mars' colour, according to Indian astrology, is red, and that of Jupiter yellow. So the red auspicious mark on the *nāyikā's* forehead signifies Mars, and the saffron or yellow, Jupiter.

Indian women put *bindi* marks on their forehead. This is made from *rolli* powder, prepared from a mixture of turmeric and lime. A yellow saffron mark is also made to enhance beauty.

477. For 'black mark' see note to verse 473.

478. The literal meaning of *bepāi* is 'without feet'. The use here is purely metaphorical. The poet means that when the barber's wife saw that the lady's heels were as red as the dye she was about to paint them with, she found the job she came for as impossible as walking is for a man without feet! The expression is also significant inasmuch as the barber's wife realized that compared to the *nāyikā's* feet her own feet did not the least appear as feet ought!

479. *khañjana* is a kind of Indian wagtail. Hindi poets often compare women's eyes to those of a *khañjana* bird. The bird is often seen in India in autumn and winter. It has a black and white plumage and a rather long tail.

Collyrium (lamp-black) is used by Indian women to beautify their eyes. The *Kāma Sūtra* recommends it for enhancing the loveliness of the eyes. (KS, p.155) *The Bride's Book of Beauty* has the following note about it: 'A layer of collyrium or the soot of a lamp is applied to make the eyes dark and bright.' (BAH)

480. *Jeth* is the third month of the Hindu calendar corresponding to May-June. It is the year's hottest month.

Jagannātha Dāsa Ratnākara has a different interpretation. According to him the words are spoken by the *nāyaka* to his beloved in order to persuade her to stay on in his house so that he may have more of her company: 'Do not venture out, dear beloved, in the scorching heat of this hot *Jeth* noon when even the Shade rests under the forest trees and dare not leave the four walls of

the house.' But this would be unnecessarily reading a romantic meaning in a verse which as a description of the heat of summer has infinitely more charm.

481. The *nāyikā* is offended because she has discovered that the *nāyaka* has come after disporting with another woman. So she angrily covers her face with her sari and will not look at him. Her companion tries to reconcile the two.

Hindi and Sanskrit poets often compare a beautiful woman's face to a lily or to the moon.

482. *raṅge tribidha raṅga*—means 'triple-coloured eyes', (*raṅge*='coloured', *tribidha*='triple'). In other words their black pupils, the whites, and the crimson hue taken on by them.

Some commentators take *sāyaka* to mean 'an arrow' thus interpreting *sāyaka sama* as 'like an arrow', but that does not tie up with 'triple-coloured'. So it is more appropriate to interpret the word here as 'twilight' or 'dusk' because that can explain why the poet speaks of the *nāyikā*'s eyes of three colours (white, black and crimson).

The lilies are abashed because the woman's eyes outmatch them in beauty. The fishes hide themselves in the depth of the pond because they can't bear to see the eyes which beat them in beauty. Besides, even otherwise, at dusk fishes seek the inner layers of water, and lilies which have blossomed all day, close their petals.

483. *bar jite* literally means 'won by might'. In other words the *nāyikā*'s eyes are victorious over Kāmadeva's arrows, i.e. their glance is sharper than the arrows.

For Kāmadeva see note to verse 463. He is also called Kāma, and is the Hindu god of love.

Hindi and Sanskrit poets often liken a beautiful woman's eyes to those of a deer.

484. The words *aṅga aṅga naga* literally mean 'the gems of the ornaments worn on each limb'. It might seem surprising that Bihārī describes his *nāyikā* as laden with so much of jewellery. But in those days ornaments were worn in plenty. According to Malik Muhammad Jāisi, a fifteenth century poet, women ought to wear ornaments for the ears, nose, neck, forearm, waist and feet (*padmāvata*).

*dīpasikhā śī deha*—this literally means 'her body glowing like the flame of a lamp', and could be interpreted to mean either 'Her body appeared to be like the flame of a lamp because of the numerous ornaments she wore', or 'the radiance of her body was like the flame of a lamp'. The two expressions (*aṅga*

*aṅga naga jagamagāta* and *dipasikhā śī deha*) are entirely separate and do not qualify each other. Hence the second explanation would be more rational and this has been followed. It should be remembered that a lamp here means just a shallow earthen oil-lamp (there was no electricity then). The flame of such a lamp would not give much light anyway. Besides, Hindi and Sanskrit poets (with poetic exaggeration of course) conceive of a woman's beautiful body as having a shine like that of gold or moonlight (see Bihārī's own verse number 466).

485. The comparison to double-tinted silk (*tāfatā rangā*) is very appropriate here. *Tāfatā* cloth woven of warp and wool of varied colours, acquires different tints when seen from particular angles. Just as childhood and youth blend in an adolescent girl. She has not abandoned her childhood ways completely, but youth influences her thoughts and manners, and brings about marked changes in her growing body.

487. Mainās are a hill tribe of Rājasthān who are dacoits and highway men. For Kāma see verse 463.

488. *gardarāne tana* ('youthful body'): the word *gadarānā* is usually used for a fruit, meaning its pre-ripening stage. The word is appropriately used here for suggestively describing the rustic girl who has crossed adolescence but not yet reached womanhood.

*hūthyau dai*—*hūthyau* is from Hindi *aṅgūthā* meaning 'the thumb'. A rustic girl in the village often stands with her palms closed into her fists, placing her hands on her hips, mocking someone or making coquettish gestures. This is called *hūthyau* in Brajabhāṣā, the language in which Bihārī wrote.

*aipana* is made by grinding turmeric and grains of rice finely and making it into a paste by adding water. A mark of this paste made on the forehead is a kind of adornment for women.

490. The *campā* tree bears very fragrant, pale yellow and rather silky flowers. A golden complexion is prized, and Hindi poets often liken a beautiful woman's body to the *campā* flower.

491. For Kāma, the Hindu god of love, see note to verse 463. His banner is a fish on a red ground, and therefore the comparison of Kṛṣṇa's fish-shaped ear ornament to Kāma's standard. Some commentators think that Kṛṣṇa's ear ornament has been likened to Kāma's flag on the gateway because some girl has found a way into his heart through the ears, i.e. he has been won over by the praise of her beauty heard from her friends or messengers. But such does

not seem to be Bihārī's import. Nowhere in the verse is there any indication that Kṛṣṇa has been attracted to any particular girl. The implication rather seems to be that thoughts of love and love-making are now arising in his heart. The comparison to Kāma's banner can be explained by the fact that the ornament is above the 'city of Kṛṣṇa's heart' on which the god of love has established his rule. So the banner flies aloft as though the ears, where the ornament is, are the roof over the gateway of that city.

492. Some commentators interpret the verse to mean that the angry *nāyikā*, looks lovely even when she is in a rage. But this appears unnecessary, nor is it implied by any word of the couplet. Most probably the poet just means to emphasize the captivating loveliness of the girl. She need not be angry to look beautiful.

The girl puts on a horizontal beauty mark which is made above the eyebrows, parallel to it, dipping down to a small arrow-like curve to touch the bridge of the nose.

493. Normally the moon which shines with the sun's borrowed light, fades away when the sun comes out. But here the rising of the sun makes the moon shine out more. The implication is that the ornament's glimmer does not throw the beauty of the girl's face (which is like the moon) into the shade, but increases its beauty.

*ṭkau* is a round ornament studded with gems which an Indian woman wears on her forehead.

496. *Jeth* is the Indian summer month when the heat is most intense, and the days are long. (see note to verse 480)

498. *śṛṅk* ('a nose-pin') is a clove-shaped ornament worn by Indian women on the nostril.

For *campā*, see note to verse 490. The expression 'alighting for once' needs an explanation. According to convention, in Hindi poetry a black bee may sit on a lotus but not on a *campā* flower. It can't be assumed that a poet like Bihārī was unaware of this. Perhaps what he is expressing is that the beauty of the *nāyikā* is so greatly enhanced by the nose-pin she wears and the sapphire glimmering in it, that men are intoxicated by it, and forget what is proper and improper; just as the black bee alights on the *campā* flower unaware that it is not a flower from which he is accustomed to suck nectar.

499. *jala keli* ('water sport') was a favourite pastime of women. Nobles and nabobs often had swimming-pools in their palaces in which the women of their harems disported.

501. The *nāyikā* is wearing a nose-ring (*besara*) with a pearl in it. The pearl casts a reflection on her lips, which the simple-minded girl, takes to be lime, and tries to wipe off again and again with the end of her sari. Seeing this her companion addresses her in these words.

A *besara* or *natha* is a big gold ring with a large pearl threaded at one end, worn by Indian girls, particularly those newly-wed. Lime is mixed with catechu paste and applied to betels which Indians chew. It is also made up into a ball with tobacco and eaten. The *nāyikā* mistakenly thinks some of the lime has got stuck on her lips and again and again wipes them with the corner of her sari.

502. The girl's messenger cleverly manages to convey to the *nāyaka* by this hint that the girl has been drinking, and so it's the right moment for him to go to her. With a drink or two she would lose her shyness and be more inclined for love-making.

503. Some commentators take the word *sādi* ('plain') as *sāri* ('sari'). But this is not quite appropriate, as then it would imply that the growing girl's breasts can be seen through her sari and the perfumed bodice. Such an interpretation is wholly unnecessary and confusing. Perhaps the girl wears her sari so that it does not cover her bodice at all. The translation follows Bhagawāna Dīna's version. (BBL, pp. 50-1)

505. *kusuma* is a red flower.

506. *maulasiri* (also called *vakula*) is a beautiful shady tree with a thick, spreading crown. Its leaves are glossy and of a deep green colour, and it yields pale fragrant flowers in March.

507. *anavaṭa* is an ornament shaped like a ring, often with gems set in it, worn by Indian women on the toe. The idea is that the toe ornament of the *nāyikā* glitters as brilliantly as the sun.

*tarivana* (also known as *kaṇaphūla*) is a flower-shaped ornament worn on the earlobes by women. It is a kind of ear-pin with the outer portion set in gems in the form of a flower (*kaṇa*= 'ear', *phūla*= 'flower').

508. The expression *keli taruna* is used in a double sense. The first *keli taruna* means a banana tree (*keli*= 'banana', *taruna*= 'tree'). The second one means 'give the pleasure of love-making (to her lover)', *keli* meaning here 'love-

making' and *taruna* 'a youth'. As the banana tree is perfectly smooth and straight, a woman's thighs are often compared to it by Hindi and Sanskrit poets.

Kāma is here spoken of as Brahmā the Creator (*bidhi maina*). This is because as the god of love, Kāma's work is only to make people fall in love. Creation is really the job of Brahmā (one of the gods of the Hindu Trinity). Here the girl's thighs, which please her lover, are *made* out of Beauty, and shaping something like that involves creation. So Kāma and Brahmā both have been mentioned.

512. *berndi* is a kind of flower-shaped ornament worn by Indian women. It rests in the middle of the forehead, and is suspended by a string tied to the braid, and runs along the parting of the hair. A real flower may sometimes replace the ornamental gold or silver one.

514. A *cakor* is the red-legged partridge found in India. According to convention in Hindi poetry, it is believed to be enamoured of the moon which so captivates the bird that it keeps gazing at it ceaselessly. When poets speak of the intensity of love they liken it to that of the *cakor* for the moon.

515. Hindu women keep the fast of *karvā cautha* which falls a week after the *Duśerā* festival (in October). The fast is kept for the longevity of their husbands' lives, and is observed very strictly, for the fasting women do not even drink water till the moon has risen in the sky. In order to see whether the moon is up or not they climb their balcony, so that the fast may be broken at the appointed time. If it is broken before, they will not earn the merit conferred by the fast, and its purpose will be defeated.

516. The fast mentioned here is the *karvā cautha* (see note verse 515 ante). The *aragha* (religious offering) is made to the moon by pouring water by the women who observe the *karvā cautha* fast. That ends the exacting fast, and after that they get down from their rooftops to eat.

518. *berndi* (not to be confused with *berndi*, the forehead ornament, mentioned in verse 512) stands for *bindi*, the round beauty mark adorning an Indian woman's brow (see note to verse 476). This may be of many different colours, (or sometimes multicoloured).

519. *sankrauna*—when the sun, after completing its path through one sign of the zodiac and in passing into another crosses the dividing line between the two, it is called the time of *sankrānti*. The period when it is passing across is considered auspicious.

*taruna* is the period in a girl's life when she has completed her fifteenth year and entering her sixteenth. The *kisora* period is when she is yet a child (between

eleven and fifteen). Some commentators read *tarani* for *taruna*, and take the word as meaning *sūrya* (the sun), in the sense that ‘the sun of the girl’s beauty is crossing her fifteenth year’, which is the dividing line between childhood and youth. (BBL, p. 12; GBS, p. 10; also Kṛṣṇa Kavi and Mānasingha)

520. The face-seeing ceremony is one which follows the advent of the new bride in her husband’s home. All the adult members of the house (men as well as women) give her money or presents as gifts when they see her face for the first time.

523. *śarada* night is the night of the full moon of the *Aświna* month (September–October) when the moon shines with the greatest brilliancy.

525. *guñjana* is another name for *ghumghact*, for which see note to verse 382.

The swallowing of the forest fire is one of the incidents in Kṛṣṇa’s life. Archer relates it as follows:

At midnight there is a heavy storm and a huge conflagration. Scarlet flames leap up, dense smoke engulfs the forest and many cattle are burnt alive. Finding themselves in great danger, Nanda, Yaśodā, and the cowherds call on Kṛṣṇa to save them. Kṛṣṇa quietly rises up, sucks the fire into his mouth and ends the blaze. (AL, p. 35)

Some commentators give an ingenious interpretation, reading in the verse something more than a description of Kṛṣṇa’s beauty. According to this, a girl loved by Kṛṣṇa has promised to meet him at a certain spot, but due to some reason cannot do so. Kṛṣṇa comes back disappointed, and wearing a garland of *guñjana* seeds purposely passes by the girl who is sitting in the company of elders of the village. The girl feels very sorry, and in this couplet tells her confidante that the *guñjana* garland on Kṛṣṇa’s bosom is to indicate to her that the separation-like forest fire which he had swallowed is now emerging, i.e. he is greatly grieved by not finding his beloved at the agreed place.

The simpler interpretation, however, has been incorporated in the translation, and this is the one by Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna. (BBL, p. 3)

527. Some commentators believe the couplet contains the words spoken by the *nāyikā*’s companion to hasten her to keep her appointment with her lover whom she is to meet. The *nāyikā* is getting delayed because she begins to wear all her ornaments. Her companion fears she will be late and her lover will go away disappointed. So she gives this subtle hint, which is also a compliment, to her friend. But the couplet can be taken to be just in praise of the *nāyikā*’s superb beauty, and the romantic slant does not really seem necessary.



Others have taken the couplet to express Bihārī's views about poetry—that good poetry needs no ornamentation (*alaṅkāras*). It subsists on its natural simplicity. This too appears fanciful, and in fact is quite in opposition to Bihārī's verses in the *Satasat* which abound in ornamentation of language and figures of speech.

532. *aṅgarāga* is a scented paste made of musk, sandalwood, saffron etc., used as a kind of cosmetic by women to heighten the beauty of their limbs. The *nāyikā*'s innate beauty is so great that instead of increasing it, cosmetics only spoil it.

533. Some critics take the couplet to be spoken by the *nāyikā*'s companion urging her to make haste in order to meet her lover with whom she has an appointment. She tells her not to delay by wearing ornaments or else she'll get late. But there is no reason why such an interpretation need be given. More likely she is just praising the *nāyikā*'s beauty.

When a mirror gets rusty and loses its silvery surface, the mercury coating behind, which is of a yellowish colour, begins to show up. This is a rather dull reddish yellow, very much inferior to the bright lustre of gold ornaments.

534. The holy rivers Gaṅgā (whose waters are clear) and Yamunā (which is bluish due to its depth) meet at Prayāga (Allahabād), where they are believed to join the subterranean Sarasvatī. This meeting point, held very sacred by Hindus, is known as Trivenī ('the triple braid'). Here the white finger of the *nāyikā* is likened to Gaṅgā and the blue sapphire in her ring to the Yamunā.

535. *pacatoriyā*—In Bihārī's time a very thin cloth was made in India, so thin that a sari made of it would weigh just about five grams! It is this particular kind of sari which is mentioned here (*paca*='five').

*jalacādara*—In the arbours of princes and nobles of Bihārī's age, one would often come across a thin stream of water falling from a height (a kind of artificially created waterfall). A row of oil-lamps would be lit and placed behind this. The glowing lights seen through the water gave a picturesque effect. This was known as a *jalacādara* (*jala*='water', *cādara*='a mantle' or 'sheet').

536. *Māgh* (January–February) is among the coldest months in India, when the sky often remains overcast and the sun can be very dimly seen beneath the clouds.

For *cakor* see note to verse 514.

537. In all probability Bihārī wrote these lines simply to bring out the *nāyikā*'s irresistible charm, but commentators have assigned various fanciful reasons for

the unsuccessful attempts of the painters to paint the *nāyikā*'s portrait, as follows: (i) The painter is so stunned by her beauty that he can only gaze and gaze and his hands refuse to move, (ii) He is so overcome with her loveliness that he begins to tremble with excitement and his fingers can't remain steady, (iii) He starts perspiring when he sees such an incomparably beautiful girl and drops of his sweat falling on the canvas smudge it, and (iv) The girl's beauty is so wonderful that it keeps changing and increasing each moment, so that what he paints can never really represent her!

538. For *gulāl* see note to verse 76.

539. In the *Phāga* (Holi) festival, it is customary for youths to give presents to girls who have played Holi with them. (see also note to verse 76)

Some commentators depict the *nāyikā* in this verse as being a dancing girl. The *nāyaka* has gone to see her dance, and she charmingly pulls at his garment, insisting on being given money as a reward. He purposely puts her off because he is overcome by the coquettish manner of her asking and wants to see more of that. But the word *phaguvā* (or *phāga*) has a definite association with the Holi festival. So this interpretation is not quite suitable.

540. Rāhu is believed to be a *daitya* (demon) and the cause of eclipses. He is supposed to seize the sun and the moon and swallow them, thus obscuring their rays. Here the black hair of the *nāyikā* is likened to Rāhu, the red mark on her brow to the sun and her face to the moon. As her hair is spread on her brow and hanging down her face, the poet imagines it's Rāhu swallowing up both the sun as well as the moon, thus causing an eclipse of both at the same time. It is believed that the most appropriate time for love-making is when the sun has not completely set and the moon has just risen.

Some commentators, including Bhagawāna Dīna, have put it the other way round. The sun and the moon combining have courageously caught Rāhu, the troublemaker. (BBL, p. 19)

But according to tradition it is Rāhu who swallows the sun or the moon. Besides, the reason given by Bhagawāna Dīna for taking this view is not good enough. He says *chabi deta* in the verse means 'gives loveliness', and when Rāhu swallows the sun or the moon, they grow dimmer. So how can their loveliness increase? It seems the words *chabi deta* are meant in a general sense, i.e. the scattered hair and the beauty mark of the girl look lovely. The words need not be tagged on to the second line.

542. *kapūramaṇī* is a brilliant yellow stone to which a dry blade of grass or a straw is attracted in the same way as iron is attracted by a magnet.

543. The *nāyikā* is grieved by the separation from her lover, who lives nearby towards the east of her house. Her companion goes on the roof to see the moon rising on the second night of the bright fortnight of the lunar month, perhaps to break a fast she has undertaken. By chance her gaze falls on the *nāyaka*, who is standing on his balcony. She hastens to the *nāyikā* to tell her of this so that she may also go up her own balcony and see her lover.

The moon of the *nāyaka*'s face is unique inasmuch as it is on the east (for the *nāyaka* is standing on the balcony of his house which is on the eastern side of the *nāyikā*'s house), while the moon of the second night of this fortnight rises on the west. Also, ordinarily the sight of the moon (being associated with romance) increases the grief of parting, but here the moon of the *nāyaka*'s face will allay it.

545. The translation is based on Ratnākara's interpretation and has been preferred because of its greater expressiveness and being more along the lines of love poetry. A simpler interpretation is given by Bhagawāna Dīna and others, as follows: 'About midnight, somehow the breeze which had remained stagnant the whole day, started, and gently brushing against my breast cooled me, driving off the daylong heat'. (BBL, p. 247)

551. *bichiyā* is an ornament, shaped like a ring, worn on the toes by Indian women. It's not heavy at all, but here the poet imagines that the *nāyikā*'s rosy feet are so delicate that her toes, being overburdened by the ornament, seem to be squeezing out the red lacquer dye she has applied to her feet!

552. Śiva, the Destroyer, one of the gods of the Hindu Trinity, is represented as wearing a crescent moon on his brow. So Kāma, the love god, seems to try and outvie Śiva by decking himself with hundreds of moons.

Kṛṣṇa is represented in Hindu mythology as wearing a crown of peacock feathers.

555. A *damṭī* is an eighth part of a pice, while a rupee contains sixty-four pice. In Hindi numerals a curved oblique mark placed on the right side of a figure signifies that it should be counted as rupees. If the curved mark is not there the figure represents so many pice.

562. For *khañjana* see note to verse 479. Some commentators take the couplet to be a description of autumn, likening it to a beautiful girl, for, with autumn come the lotuses, the *khañjana* birds and, of course, the moon. But the general trend of the verse shows it is to emphasize the girl's beauty rather than that of autumn.

563. The *dupahariyā* flower (also known as *bandhujīva* or *bandhuka*) is a red flower which blossoms in the rainy season.

564. Bhagawāna Dīna interprets the couplet somewhat differently, though the import is the same. His reading is: 'Sugar cane, honey and nectar remain desirous of talking to her' (in other words her speech is so sweet that they get their sweetness from that only). (BBL, pp. 115–6) The translation follows the simpler interpretation given by other commentators.

567. The waters of the Yamunā river are deep and so take on a bluish hue.

573. The *palāśa* (also known as *dhāka*) is a common forest tree bearing many flaming scarlet-orange flowers in February–March. It flowers in a leafless condition and the flowers have black calyccycles.

575. Bhagawāna Dīna believes (with justification) that the verse is not Bihārī's and ought not to be included in the *Satasat*. (BBL, p. 269) Other recensions have, however, included it, and so it has been incorporated in the translation. The *nāyikā* could be a village belle.

577. The comparison of lovely eyes to a wagtail, black bees, fish and deer is conventional in Hindi and Sanskrit poetry.

580. Brahma or Brahman (to be distinguished from Brahmā the Creator) is a Vedāntic concept meaning the invisible Reality which is of the same nature as the soul (*ātmā*). The idea often comes up in the Vedānta and particularly in the philosophy of Śāṅkara, the renowned Indian philosopher. In the philosophy of Śāṅkara, known as *advaita*, Brahman, sometimes conceived as being consciousness bliss (*sat-cit-ānanda*), is believed to be unseen, and comprehensible only by wisdom and by the authority of the *Vedas* (Hindu scriptures).

581. Brahmā is the Creator, one of the gods of the Hindu Trinity.

582. Commentators interpret the word *mutaharu* differently. Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna takes it to be 'the front part of the face'. (BBL, p. 252) Others, like Dr Deśarājasingha Bhāṭṭ, take it as 'that portion of the wrap or sari which hangs down the head'. (BBB, p. 420) The latter interpretation has been adopted in the translation because it sounds more reasonable. The poet has already said that the girl souses her face with water (*murṭha pakhāri*), and to say again that she washes the front part of her face is mere repetition, which one would not expect from a poet of Bihārī's stature. Besides, this interpretation has also been taken for *mutaharu* by Dr S.S. Pāṇacāla in *Bihārī's Language*. (BBP, p. 292)

584. *murāsā* (also called *kaṛṇa-phūla* or *tarkṭ*) is a flower-shaped ornament worn by Indian women in the ears, either as a clasp, or more often (and always in old times), by being screwed on a pin through pierced earlobes. It may be set with pearls, or sometimes with gems.

585. The lane in which the two are going is streaked with moonlight, so that at some places it is dark and at others bright. Where it is dark, Kṛṣṇa's form, which is of a dark hue, merges with the darkness, and only Rādhā can be seen. At other places Rādhā, who is fair and of a golden complexion, merges with the moonlight, and only Kṛṣṇa is visible.

586. *bindi* is the round beauty mark Indian women put in the middle of their foreheads.

Some commentators take the couplet as a description of the *nāyikā* coming from her bath, and interpret *silasile* as 'wet' (meaning thereby that her hair is still damp and so looks lovelier). (BBB, pp. 428–9) But wet hair can hardly be said to be attractive. More likely it means *phulela*, i.e. 'oil scented with the attar of fragrant flowers'. (BBL, pp. 59–60) Thus *silasile bāra* (or *bāla*) would mean 'hair glistening with perfumed oil'. Bhagawāna Dīna suggests an alternative meaning also if the verse is taken as spoken by the woman messenger of the *nāyikā* who says: 'Go to her, for she eagerly awaits you, looking lovely in simple adornment.' (BBL, p. 60) But this interpretation is unnecessary and there is nothing in the wordings of the couplet to warrant it.

592. Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna takes *bhāji* to mean 'fleeing' (BBL, p. 20), but that does not appear to fit in with the sense. The moon loses its brilliance in an eclipse, and so fear of the demon, Rāhu (who is believed to cause the eclipse by swallowing the moon), is more likely to make the moon keep its brilliance in Mars' safe custody rather than just run away! The translation follows Ratnākara's version, which takes *bhāji* to mean 'separated from' not 'fleeing'.

*akhat* or *akṣat* means 'consecrated grains of rice'. These are applied to the middle of the forehead. The *nāyikā* has been to the local temple, and the priest has put the rice grains on her forehead. When she comes home she applies the red *bindi* (round beauty mark) on the same place. She puts the *bindi* on the rice grains because it would be improper for her to remove the holy grains for putting her beauty mark there. The rice grains shine against the background of the red *bindi*, hence the comparison of the moon's brilliance hid in Mars (which is believed to be of the colour of blood, see note to verse 696).

Ordinarily when the moon is in the orbit of Mars it is considered to be an auspicious moment. That's why the *nāyikā*'s messenger tells the *nāyaka* to go to

his beloved, for at this time she will give him the greatest pleasure in love-making.

595. Perhaps the rose petal got stuck to her cheek when she slept or lay in her bed. It was customary to strew rose petals or tender flowers on the bed.

The translation follows Bhagawāna Dīna's version reading the word as *gāla* ('cheek') (BBL, pp. 40–1). Some commentators read it as *gāta* meaning 'the body'. (BSR, p. 539 and BBL, p. 437) But even though the rose petal can't be easily distinguished because of its similarity to the *nāyikā*'s tender and rosy skin, it must have been *seen* as a rose petal! And it would be far easier for the *nāyikā*'s friend to notice it on her cheek than on her limbs (which would be hidden by her dress).

596. For *campā* see note to verse 490.

597. *cimkā* is a kind of net of ropes or other material, suspended from a roof. It was the old system to keep earthen pots containing curd, butter and eats, away from the reach of cats, mice and so forth.

The *nāyaka* finds his beloved placing a pot of butter in the *cimkā*, and is so enraptured by her raised arms (revealing part of her breasts and waist because of her dress moving up), that he wants her to remain like that always. Compare this with Keats's *Ode to a Grecian Urn*:

Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave  
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;  
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,  
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;  
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,  
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

598. *sunakirabā* or *sunaktrā* (also known as *bhaṁbhtrā*) is a winged insect which appears in the rainy season in large numbers. It has shiny wings with the dull gleam of mica. The village woman sticks one of these wings on her forehead in place of the usual *bindī* (beauty mark).

## Wisdom

599. *pīnasa* is a nasal disease known to the Hindu *āyurveda* system of medicine, in which the patient loses his sense of smell.

It is believed the lines were composed by Bihārī, after the death of Jayasingha, his royal patron, when he ceased to be honoured in the royal durbar because the rajah's successor had no taste for poetry.

605. *dhatūrā* is a thorny berry. It is a kind of poison, but just a little of it produces intoxication. Its other name is *kanaka*, which is also the word for 'gold' in Hindi.

606. See note to verse 605 *ante*.

608. *moṣu* (*mokṣa*) means liberation or salvation. It implies freedom from rebirth in the world of suffering and a union of the soul with god, and is the highest acme of Hindu spiritualism.

609. For *ghuṁghaci* see note to verse 382.

612. For *gutahala* see note to verse 288. It is a very common flower, red in colour, but without scent.

615. *Jeth* (May–June) is the hottest month in India, while *Māgh* (January–February) is the coldest.

Some commentators give a different interpretation. According to them the *nāyaka* has had a tiff with the *nāyikā* and abandons her for his co-wife. The co-wife feels proud of having won his favours, and seeing her so, her companion tells her: 'O foolish woman, don't feel puffed up on getting your husband's love. You've won it only because he has quarrelled with the *nāyikā*. As soon as he'll get fed up with you, you'll seem good no longer and another woman, for whom he'll forsake you, will be pleasing to him; just as the shade seems pleasant in the hot summer *Jeth* month, but troublesome when the winter month of *Māgh* comes.' (BBB, p. 213; BSR, p. 257) This would be reading more into the couplet than what perhaps Bihārī actually meant. The more obvious interpretation (following that of Bhagawāna Dīna, BBL, p. 187) has been preferred.

617. It is believed that the stem of a lotus flower lengthens with the increase of water in the lake, so that the lotus always remains above its surface.

619. The *madāra* is the swallow wort plant. Both the *madāra* and the sun are known as *arka* in Hindi.

620. *amāvasyā* is the last day of the dark half of the month, when the night is pitch dark.

621. The Mārwar country is a desert area, where it is very difficult to get water. But watermelons grow there of themselves in the sandy soil.

*Jeth* is the hottest month of the Indian summer corresponding to May–June.

624. ‘Scorning glances’ needs explanation. There is a pun on *hara* (the last word in the second line). The word means ‘a necklace’ or ‘garland’, and also ‘defeat’. Thus onlookers exclaim ‘*hara! hara!*’ i.e. ‘defeat! defeat!’ when the garland flaunts itself on the girl’s raised breasts.

626. Some commentators take the couplet as advice to keep a friendship. Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna, for example, gives the following interpretation: ‘If you want the brilliance of your friendship not to fade, and to prevent animosity from entering your friend’s mind, do not let the dust of your authority settle on it (i.e. do not lord over him).’ (BBL, p. 267 and BSR, p. 311) But this interpretation seems rather farfetched and, so, the other simpler one (BBB, p. 262) has been preferred.

628. Some critics think the verse expresses Bihārī’s disgust at the profligacy of the courtiers in Jayasiṅgha’s court, but it seems to be just a general observation.

629. The Hindu scriptures are the *Vedas* and *Smṛtis*. *Vedas* (root *vid*=‘know’), the foundation of Hindu religion, are hymns written in Sanskrit. There are four *Vedas*—*Rg*, *Yajur*, *Sāma* and *Atharva*.

*Smṛti* ‘what was remembered’, ordinarily meant only the *dharma-śāstras* (law books). Manu, the ancient Hindu law-giver says ‘By *Śruti* (‘direct revelation’) is meant the *Veda* and by *Smṛti* “the institutes of law”’. In its wider sense, however, *Smṛti* is said to include the *Ramāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata*, and the *Purāṇas*.

633. The *śrādhā* fortnight is the period in the year when Hindus make ceremonial offerings of food to their ancestors. It is customary to put aside a little of the offering for a crow to eat.

634. For ‘*śrādhā* fortnight’ see note to verse 633 *ante*. If the crow does not itself come to take the food offered, he is persuaded to do so by getting away a little distance and beckoning to him.

635. Some commentators take the lines to refer to the *nāyikā* whose lover has gone away to a foreign country. The idea is that, as the spring comes again bringing back the roses to the rose bush, her lover will return to give her bliss. (BSR, p. 347) Others think they may refer to a talented person who does not forsake his royal patron in the latter’s bad days, hoping that things will take a turn for the better. (BBB, p. 285) But most probably the lines are meant to be a general observation of the poet. (BBL, p. 270)



637. Washermen, labourers and potters, use donkeys for transport—washermen for taking bundles of clothes to be washed, labourers for carrying the mud they dig (most houses have mud walls in Indian villages), and potters to transport their finished earthen pots for sale.

644. According to Indian astrology when the spots on the moon grow less or disappear, it means some disaster like a deluge or a calamity, which may cause the end of creation (*pralaya*) is about to take place.

649. Thé translation is based on Ratnākara's interpretation. Lālā Bhagawāna Dīna interprets the verse differently. According to him the words are spoken by the *nāyikā* to her erring husband who is in the habit of going out and spending a lot of time with his mistresses. She points this out, and her apologetic husband promises not to go out any longer. But she does not believe him, and says: 'You may resolve not to go out, or give a thousand excuses protesting your innocence, but I will not believe you, for a man's nature cannot change.' (BBL, p. 270) The interpretation may be ingenious, but appears to be unnecessary, because in all probability the poet is just making a general observation.

650. *cola* is a kind of wood, pieces of which when placed in water and put on the boil for some time, yield a kind of fast dye. The dye is so permanent that if a cloth is dyed in it, the colour will never fade.

652. Ratnākara has taken the verse in a different sense. According to him it is addressed to a person who has become vain because he is treated with honour by a king: 'Why are you swollen with vanity because you are honoured in the king's court? Don't you know there are other monarchs mightier than him, before whom he bows and at whose feet he falls?' (BBL, p. 425) The language of the verse, however, and the specific mention of Kṛṣṇa's peacock feather, and particularly of Rādhā is a clear indication that the verse is meant for Kṛṣṇa (who is conceived of as wearing a crown of peacock feathers).

653. The day after the Divālī festival (the festival of the lamps) is celebrated in India, in the *Kārttika* month of the Hindu calendar (October–November), the worship of *goverdhana* or *godhana* is held. In villages cultivators make figures of *godhana* (conical in shape) out of cowdung (a cow is considered sacred among Hindus) and worship them by offering flowers etc., and by also putting vermilion marks. After the worship concludes the cow dung figures are left lying where they are, and so are often trampled under the hooves of stray cows, buffaloes, bullocks and other animals.

## Devotion

654. This forms the opening verse of the *Satasai* and, as is usual with Hindi poets, is in the form of an invocation. Such invocations are of three kinds. The first kind seeks a blessing from some god or goddess. The second kind is one in which the writer salutes his guru or some divinity. The third kind tells the reader about the subject matter and the object of the work. Bihārī's invocation is a combination of the first and third, because it seeks the blessings of Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa's consort, and also indicates that the author is writing about the loves of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, a theme common in Hindi love poetry of the *Śṛṅgāra rasa* kind. (see Introduction)

*bhavabādhā*—According to Hindu belief there are three kinds of sorrows. These are (i) *ādhyātmika*, sorrows like diseases and mental anguish, originating from the sufferer himself; so called because these rise from the *ātmā* (self), (ii) *ādhibhautika*, caused to the sufferer by other living creatures like beasts, reptiles, birds and so forth. These are called *ādhibhautika* because they arise from *bhūtas* 'created beings', and (iii) *ādhidaivika*, suffering resulting from supernatural forces like the ill-effects of stars, planets, evil spirits, ghosts and the like. Since these sorrows are caused by *daivas* or *devas* (gods) they are called *ādhidaivika*. Here the poet uses the words *bhavabādhā* (*bhava*='world', *bādhā*='impediments', i.e. sorrows) apparently in a general sense to include all kinds of sorrows.

*ja tana ki jhāṛn paraiṁ*—there can be three interpretations to these words according to the various meanings of *jhāṛn paraiṁ* (viz. 'falling of the shadow of', 'thinking of' or 'having a glimpse of'). These are:

- (i) Rādhā, whose very shadow captivates Kṛṣṇa, bestow your blessings on me.
- (ii) I seek the blessings of that Rādhā, by meditating on whose form dark-shaped sins and sorrows are destroyed. (Śyāma is another name for Kṛṣṇa, but it also means 'black'. Kṛṣṇa is conceived of as being 'dark-hued'.)
- (iii) Rādhā is believed to have a yellowish complexion and Kṛṣṇa a bluish one. So when Rādhā's shadow falls on Kṛṣṇa, her lover, the yellow and the blue mingle and become green (*harita*='green', *duti*='splendour'). In other words the splendour of Rādhā's body increases when Kṛṣṇa is with her. Some critics think this shows Bihārī's knowledge of colours, for green results from the mixing of blue and yellow. The other (and more obvious) interpretation is that when Kṛṣṇa sees Rādhā he begins

to sparkle with joy. The expression *harā-bharā* is used in the sense of being revived or refreshed. A drooping plant becomes *harā-bharā* when it is watered. Similarly here, when Kṛṣṇa sees his beloved Rādhā, his face begins to sparkle with joy:

Of these alternative interpretations, the simplest and most likely is the third, i.e. 'the very glimpse of Rādhā delights Kṛṣṇa'.

655. The incident of the elephant is from the Purāṇas. While an elephant was drinking water from a stream, a crocodile seized his foot and began to pull him into the current. The elephant could not free himself despite all his strength, and when only the tip of his trunk—just so much as a needle's eye—remained free of the swirling waters, he called on god. His prayer was heard. The crocodile died and the elephant was saved. It seems, says the poet, that after this god decided never again to come to the aid of his devotees!

The verse is in the form of a complaint or taunt addressed to god (known in Hindi poetry as *ulāhanā*). Many of Bihārī's devotional verses are couched in this form.

656. Some of the words in the verse have a double meaning. Thus *taraunā* means 'without salvation' (*tarānā*='to get salvation'), and also 'a flower-shaped ear ornament worn by women'; *Śruti* means 'the Vedas' and also 'the ears'; *nāka-bāsa* means 'finding a place in heaven' and also 'being on the nose' (according to Indian poetical concepts the nose is given primary importance in the human body and the ears are hardly ever mentioned); *besari* means 'the vilest soul' and also 'a ring-shaped ear ornament worn on the nostril by Indian women'; *mukutana* means 'persons who have obtained salvation' and also 'pearls'.

Because of the double meaning of some of the words the verse can either be taken as emphasizing the superiority of devotion to god over mere recitation of the scriptures or knowledge, or meant to depict the splendour of the woman's ear ornament. This is one of the verses which shows Bihārī's supreme poetic skill. The devotional aspect has been preferred as it seems to be closer to the poet's intention.

657. Yama, the Hindu Pluto, god of Death, is represented with a fearful visage of green colour, wearing red clothes and riding a bull. He bears a ponderous mace, and a noose to secure his victims. The road to his abode is guarded by two insatiable dogs with four eyes and wide nostrils, and so the souls of those dying, hurry past them. In his palace called Kalicī, he sits on his throne known as Vicārabhū and judges the souls of the dead as they are brought to him by his

messengers (*yamadūtas*), while his two chief attendants, Canda and Kāla-puruṣa, stand by. As his porter, Vaidhyata, admits each soul, Citragupta, his recorder, reads out from his register, called *agrasandhāni*, the deeds performed by him in his life on earth. Yama then gives his judgment. The soul either ascends to the abode of the manes (*pitṛloka*) or is born on earth again in another form, or is sent to one of the twenty-one hells according to his guilt.

Nṛsiṅha or Narasiṅha is believed to be one of the incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu. He was half-man and half-lion. According to mythology, he emerged from a stone pillar to kill Hiranyakaśipu, a wicked demon-king. The demon had been tormenting his own son Prahalāda, who was Viṣṇu's devotee.

658. Although only the word *gṛdahin* ('vultures') is mentioned in the verse, the implied reference is to Jaṭāyu, who in Hindu mythology is the son of Garuṭa, Viṣṇu's vehicle, and the king of vultures. Jaṭāyu fought fiercely with Rāvaṇa, the demon-king of Lankā, when he was carrying off Rāma's wife, Sītā. He was mortally wounded, but managed to inform Rāma about Sītā's fate before he died. Rāma, along with his brother Lakṣmana, performed Jaṭāyu's funeral rites, and their ally Jaṭāyu attained heaven.

It was Rāma who redeemed Jaṭāyu, yet Bihārī mentions Kṛṣṇa (Murārī is another name for him). This is because he considered both of them as one, for both the gods (Rāma and Kṛṣṇa) are believed to be incarnations of Viṣṇu.

661. Rāma is the seventh incarnation of Viṣṇu. He was the eldest son of Daśaratha, a king of the Solar race, reigning in Ayodhyā. Rāma's story is related in the *Rāmāyaṇa* or *Rāmacaritamānasa*.

664. The verse could also be taken as meant to console the *nāyikā* whose lover has gone away. The *nāyikā*'s confidante says, 'Friend, bear your grief cheerfully. When you hope for pleasure from him, do not resent the sorrow of parting.' But *sīsa cathai lai* ('accept with reverential resignation') would more appropriately refer to god, for the *nāyikā* can hardly be believed to have 'reverence' for her lover!

666. The Candra clan is a branch of the Yādavas. Kṛṣṇa's father, Vasudeva, king of Dvārakā, was of the Yādava race and his mother was Devakī.

The Braja country (Vṛndāvana) was the one where Kṛṣṇa was brought up amidst cowherds and milkmaids by his foster parents Nanda and Yaśodā, and the scene of his amours with the milkmaids and Rādhā.

Commentators give an alternative interpretation to mean: 'O Kṛṣṇa-like Keśavarāma (Keśavarāi, Bihārī's father), you were born in a family of Brāhmins, and of your own accord settled in Braja. You are like Kṛṣṇa to me.

Relieve my sorrows.’ This would be addressed by the poet not to the god Kṛṣṇa, but to his own father. (BBB, p. 82 and BSR, p. 92)

The alternative interpretation is unlikely because (i) The words *pragaṭa bhaye* mean ‘appeared as an incarnation’ and this could apply only to Kṛṣṇa, who is considered to be an incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu, (ii) It would seem presumptuous to pray to one’s father to relieve him of sorrows. This would better apply to god, and (iii) Bihārī has petitioned Kṛṣṇa to relieve him of his sorrows in many other verses also. So this too most probably refers to Kṛṣṇa.

667. Hindus often paint (usually with sandalwood paste) sacerdotal marks on their foreheads or other parts of the body. The Śaivites (worshippers of Śiva) apply vertical marks, while Vaiṣṇavites (worshippers of Viṣṇu) apply horizontal marks.

669. In this verse the poet puts forth the *advaita* view according to which only the formless god (Brahman) exists as Truth and Reality, and the world of name and form (*nāma-rūpa*) is unreal. The idea is that the world is only a reflection of god.

670. Rādhā, in her divine aspect, is considered to be an incarnation of the goddess Lakṣmī and is worshipped accordingly.

Prayāga (Allahābād) is considered sacred, for here the holy rivers Gaṅgā and Yamunā meet the fabled subterranean Sarasvatī.

Kṛṣṇa, who is believed to be of a bluish complexion, is likened to the deep waters of the blue Yamunā river, while Rādhā, who is fair, to the clear Gaṅgā waters. The two came together in the Braja country, and so the woods of Braja where they made love are said to have the sanctity of Prayāga.

672. *barana* or *varṇa* means literally ‘class’ (not ‘caste’). Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are not of the same *varṇa* in the ordinary sense of the word, for in reality Kṛṣṇa belonged to a royal family of Brāhmins and Rādhā was a cowherd girl. They are said to be of the same class here because they complement each other (see verse 654 ‘*jā tana ki jhāir̥ṁ parair̥ṁ syāma harita duti hoi*’), or maybe, as Bhagawāna Dīna says, because their names are almost identical—Kṛṣṇa is also called Śyāma, and Rādhā Śyāmā. (BBL, p. 4)

*locana jugala aneka* literally means ‘many pairs of eyes’, i.e. the divine couple can be seen only by one who has ‘many pairs of eyes’. The idea is that their divine glory cannot be comprehended by human eyes. When Arjuna, Kṛṣṇa’s disciple, wished to see his divine form, Kṛṣṇa told him, ‘You cannot see that by your human eyes, so I will give you divine eyes to see it.’ It was only then that Arjuna saw Lord Kṛṣṇa’s divine form. (*Bhagavad Gītā*, XI)

673. Hari is another name for the god, Viṣṇu, whose incarnation Kṛṣṇa is believed to be.

674. For *moṣu* (or *mokṣa*) meaning 'liberation', see note to verse 608.

675. A *vaijayanti* garland is a particular kind of garland which the god, Kṛṣṇa, wears. It is made of five different colours of flowers. The word *māla* ('garland') means here the *vaijayanti* garland worn by Kṛṣṇa.

679. The reference is to the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Rāma's wife, Sītā, was carried away by Rāvaṇa, the demon-king of Lankā. Rāma took the assistance of the monkey-god and, with an army of monkey warriors, waged a war on Rāvaṇa and rescued Sītā. The problem was how to bridge the intervening ocean between Lankā and the mainland to take the army across. This was solved by Nala and Nīla, who were experts in building bridges. But they could only do so with Rāma's divine help. The monkeys hauled big stones and dropped them into the ocean. By Rāma's grace they miraculously floated on the water, and a bridge was soon built.

680. *tribhaṅgi lāl*—playing on his flute, Kṛṣṇa stands with his body waving in three undulations. So he is called *tribhaṅgi* (*tri*='three', *bhaṅga*='waves').

Translator's comment—Bihārī of course meant the verse to convey his deep devotion for the god. He is eager that Lord Kṛṣṇa should dwell in his heart. So he is willing, even at the risk of being called wicked, to make his heart crooked. Kṛṣṇa's askew form will easily be contained in such a heart for 'a square peg in a round hole' will not be easily put together. But the couplet could also be taken to mean that it is generally straightforward men who undergo suffering in the world. If god inhabits the heart of a simple and virtuous man he gives him sorrows, while in the crooked heart he's at ease!

683. Some commentators give an alternative meaning: 'If one considers god as having qualities, god becomes more distant to him. But if he is thought of as formless he is all-pervading, and being then able to reside in a man's heart comes closest to him, as a kite given string flies higher, but pulled, comes near.' (BSR, p. 340) However, Bihārī being a devotee of god in his form as Kṛṣṇa, whose attributes he has described in a number of couplets, will hardly get into the controversy of whether god is with or without form. The other interpretation, which seems to be more direct and appealing and applies equally to the worshipper of god with form as well as to the believer in a formless god, has been incorporated in the translation.

686. See note to verse 438.

687. The Braja country, which surrounds Mathurā, was the scene of Kṛṣṇa's early life. The verse brings out the divine aspect of Kṛṣṇa.

690. For the reference to the lifting of the Goverdhana mount see note to verse 438.

Bhagawāna Dīna has given an alternative interpretation also from the angle of love. The *nāyikā* is pretending to be angry and her companion urges her to make up with her lover. She tells the *nāyikā*: 'See, the dark clouds rising in the sky fill hearts with longing. Abandon your indifference and make love to your attractive lover who is fond of disporting in the woods. Clasp him to your rising hill-like breasts.' (BBL, p. 134) Such an interpretation is possible because some of the words in the couplet have dual meanings. These are (i) *manamohana*, which means 'Kṛṣṇa' as well as 'the *nāyaka* who captivates the heart', (ii) *ghanasyāma*, which means 'Kṛṣṇa whose form is as charming as the dark clouds' and 'dark clouds', (iii) *kuñjabihārī*, meaning firstly, 'Kṛṣṇa who sported with milkmaids in the forest', and secondly, 'the *nāyaka* who is eager to make love in the woods', (iv) *giradhārī*, meaning both 'Kṛṣṇa, who lifted the Goverdhana mount' and 'one who is endowed with rising hill-like breasts' (*giri*='a hill').

The devotional sense is, however, more suitable because of the reference to the various incidents in Kṛṣṇa's life. This is also favoured by most of *Satasat*'s commentators.

691. The Kali age or Kaliyuga is one of the four *yugas* (ages) of the world's existence, according to Hindu cosmogony. It is the last of the *yugas* (the one in which, it is believed we are living) in which righteousness and virtue are at their lowest ebb.

### In Praise of Jayasiṅgha

693. *lākhaṇa kī fauja* cannot be interpreted as 'an army of lakhs' because the mention of 'lakhs' twice in the couplet would be a poetic defect which a poet of Bihārī's standing could not be guilty of. *Lākhaṇa* was most probably a chieftain or a little-known prince, for there is no mention of him in contemporary accounts of Bihārī's times. The *Ma'āsir-ul-umrā* mentions a warrior Lakkhī, who was a *mansabdār* in the Nizāmsāhī Rāj, and *deshmukh* of Sandhkher in Daulatābād. He was Sivājī's maternal grandfather. When Shāh Jahān, the Moghul emperor, was ruling, Jayasiṅgha was sent to accompany Khānjalān Lodhī in his campaigns in the south of India. Maybe Jayasiṅgha encountered

Lākhana during one of these. Or possibly he may be a Jāt warrior with whom Jayasingha fought. The Mahāvan Jāts of Agra were powerful in Shāh Jahān's time, and the emperor had sent Qāsim Khān, whom Jayasingha accompanied, to subdue them.

695. *darapana-dhāma* (*darapana*=‘mirror’, *dhāma*=‘house’ or ‘place’) means ‘the hall of mirrors’. Jayasingha, who was Bihārī's royal patron, used to sit in the hall of his palace (known as *śīśamahāl*, *śīśa*=‘mirror’, *mahāl*=‘palace’) at Āmergarh when he gave audience to the public. The walls of this hall were studded with tiny, round mirrors. The mirrors were so placed that each one would reflect the figure of the rajah when he sat on the throne. Shāh Jahān himself had such a hall of mirrors in his palace at Agra.

696. The planet Mars, which gets its name from the Greek god of war, Ares, whom the Romans identified with Mars, is believed to be of blood-red colour. The poet's use of the simile is particularly appropriate because Jayasingha's face shone red, showing both his zeal to fight the warriors in war and also his anger towards them.

697. The verse actually reads: ‘O hawk, do not, under the influence of someone else, kill innocent birds for the advantage of others, for in doing so you do not gain any merit, and your labour goes to waste.’ But this by itself would not convey what the verse really endeavours to express. In a veiled manner, the poet seeks to criticize his royal patron, Jayasingha, for fighting with the Rājputs for the benefit of the emperor, Shāh Jahān, whose vassal he was. Hence mention has been made in the translated version of Jayasingha and Shāh Jahān as well.

698. Under orders of his father Shāh Jahān, Aurangzīb, was sent at the head of an army to attack Balkh. Jayasingha was also sent along with him. The Moghul forces were trapped and surrounded, but Jayasingha very cleverly and with great valour, managed to rescue them and brought them safely to Kābul.

699. Adhāsura was one of the many demons sent by Kaṇsa the tyrant usurper of Mathurā to kill Kṛṣṇa, his divine rival. The demon swallowed the cowherd folk along with all their cows, but Kṛṣṇa ripped its belly open and saved them.

700. *patina rākhi cādara curī*—*cādara* is a ‘wrap’ or ‘shawl’ and *curī* or *cūrī* means ‘bangles’, while *rākhi* is ‘kept’ or ‘preserved’. If a Mohammedan dies his widow ceases to cover herself with a wrap; while in the case of the death of a Hindu, his widow breaks her glass bangles as a sign of widowhood. Thus by bringing the trapped soldiers from the Balkh battle, Jayasingha ‘preserved’ the



*cādaras* of the Mohammedan wives and the *cūris* of the Hindu women. In other words he saved them from being widowed.

701. Jayasingha was Bihārī's royal patron. He was delighted with one of the poet's couplets (see note to verse 12) and commissioned him to write others, giving a gold piece (*mohur*) for each one written (see Introduction). Later Jayasingha made Bihārī his court poet.

Diverse tastes—*The Satasat* contains various kinds of verses on diverse themes such as love, love-making, separation, human beauty and the beauty of nature, wisdom and so forth. So the poet calls it a 'book ministering to diverse tastes and fancies'.

### *Miscellaneous*

702. The verse has a personal angle inasmuch as Bihārī had to live in his in-laws' house at Mathurā for sometime in his youth. Perhaps this verse is an expression of his feelings about the treatment given to him there.

An alternative interpretation is also given by some commentators as follows: 'A woman can't show indifference and keep away from her lover for long in the winter month of *Pūs*. Her indifference is as shortlived as the welcome a man gets when he stays too long with his in-laws.' (BBB, pp. 125–6)

*Pūs* is the month of extreme winter corresponding to the month of December–January according to the English calendar, when the days are shortest.

706. *chāyāgrāhini* literally 'catcher of the shadow' (*chāyā*='shadow', *grahāṇa*='catch' or 'seize'). The reference is to Singhikā or Chāyāgrāhini, who was a female demon living in the ocean near the island of Laṅkā. She had the power of catching a living being by his shadow. Once the shadow came in her clutches the man (or animal) died and she would devour him. Hanumāna, the monkey-god, Rāma's messenger bound for Laṅkā, came across her while he was flying over the ocean (he is believed to be the son of the Wind god). The demon attacked him, but he was able to kill her. The incident is mentioned in the *Rāmacaritamānasa* of Tulsīdāsa.

708. Some commentators, including Bhagawāna Dīna, read the word *kahalāne* ('restless' or 'agitated with heat') as two words *kaha lāne*, which in the dialect of Bundelakhanda means 'why?' or 'for what reason?' (BBL, pp. 236–7). Thus they think the first line of the couplet poses a question and the second one is its

answer. The explanation given is that an artist presented a painting to Jayasingha, Bihārī's royal patron, in which a peacock and a snake, a lion and a deer, were resting together without caring to prey on each other. The rajah asked his courtiers why such creatures had been painted together. No one could answer him except Bihārī, who gave him the reason for this in the second line of the couplet.

This ingenious explanation, however, seems to be unnecessary, for the interpretation of *kahalāne* as 'oppressed by the heat' is good enough, and fits in very appropriately in the context. The direct meaning has, therefore, been incorporated in the translation.

709. According to popular belief the male and female ruddy geese stay together in the day, but part at night, each of them going to the two extreme ends of the pond. From there, they call to each other plaintively all through the night. So the longer winter nights keep them separated for longer. On the other hand lovers are happy because the longer nights provide them more opportunity for love-making.

710. The idea here is 'When you are in Rome do as the Romans do'. The cultured girl has no need to put on airs because she is sure of herself. But if she does not behave affectedly as the women in the village do, they'll laugh at her and not take her as one of their own.

711. The astrologer was happy because he knew he would get rid of his wife's lover soon, for according to the horoscope the man who fathered the child would die soon after. And of course he was happy to know it was not *he* who was to die! Astrology has a great following in India, and it is believed that if one's horoscope has been correctly cast at the time of birth, then the future events in the life of that person can be accurately foretold.

712. Elongated eyes, pointed at the corners, are considered very attractive in the Indian concept of beauty.



# APPENDIX

## *Key to the Verses*

The serial number of the verses as in the text is given in the first column and the number in Ratnākara's arrangement in the second.

<i>Serial number in text</i>	<i>Number in Ratnākara's arrangement</i>	<i>Serial number in text</i>	<i>Number in Ratnākara's arrangement</i>	<i>Serial number in text</i>	<i>Number in Ratnākara's arrangement</i>
1	5	26	128	51	206
2	9	27	134	52	207
3	10	28	139	53	208
4	12	29	144	54	212
5	15	30	147	55	213
6	18	31	154	56	215
7	27	32	157	57	216
8	30	33	158	58	218
9	32	34	159	59	219
10	34	35	160	60	224
11	36	36	162	61	227
12	38	37	166	62	232
13	45	38	174	63	239
14	47	39	177	64	242
15	50	40	178	65	245
16	58	41	179	66	246
17	66	42	182	67	247
18	75	43	193	68	249
19	78	44	194	69	257
20	85	45	195	70	259
21	88	46	196	71	262
22	118	47	198	72	263
23	121	48	200	73	264
24	123	49	202	74	265
25	126	50	205	75	272

*The Satasai*

76	280	119	470	162	606
77	290	120	472	163	610
78	291	121	480	164	611
79	292	122	493	165	612
80	293	123	500	166	613
81	294	124	502	167	616
82	302	125	503	168	617
83	305	126	505	169	618
84	307	127	508	170	623
85	309	128	514	171	633
86	316	129	515	172	634
87	320	130	517	173	636
88	325	131	518	174	638
89	336	132	522	175	639
90	349	133	523	176	645
91	352	134	524	177	646
92	356	135	527	178	650
93	363	136	530	179	652
94	368	137	531	180	658
95	372	138	533	181	663
96	373	139	534	182	667
97	374	140	542	183	678
98	375	141	543	184	688
99	382	142	545	185	697
100	384	143	547	186	698
101	386	144	550	187	702
102	397	145	552	188	705
103	399	146	554	189	706
104	406	147	557	190	707
105	407	148	564	191	709
106	417	149	570	192	23
107	422	150	572	193	24
108	423	151	574	194	76
109	424	152	577	195	84
110	436	153	582	196	96
111	443	154	583	197	99
112	444	155	586	198	129
113	447	156	589	199	130
114	450	157	592	200	137
115	452	158	598	201	155
116	454	159	599	202	183
117	460	160	601	203	214
118	468	161	605	204	319

# Appendix

205	324	248	240	291	587
206	354	249	250	292	591
207	369	250	260	293	600
208	387	251	267	294	603
209	463	252	281	295	607
210	464	253	286	296	608
211	465	254	287	297	609
212	466	255	289	298	640
213	494	256	296	299	653
214	571	257	297	300	654
215	594	258	315	301	657
216	627	259	323	302	662
217	630	260	332	303	700
218	632	261	339	304	29
219	642	262	346	305	49
220	643	263	348	306	72
221	644	264	365	307	107
222	651	265	379	308	108
223	655	266	380	309	132
224	665	267	383	310	197
225	683	268	393	311	233
226	14	269	394	312	243
227	22	270	410	313	256
228	33	271	446	314	273
229	65	272	449	315	279
230	79	273	456	316	310
231	82	274	458	317	314
232	83	275	467	318	337
233	97	276	482	319	343
234	100	277	498	320	360
235	113	278	499	321	364
236	115	279	507	322	370
237	122	280	511	323	404
238	136	281	520	324	409
239	153	282	528	325	412
240	168	283	540	326	415
241	169	284	546	327	416
242	184	285	551	328	453
243	185	286	555	329	476
244	186	287	558	330	484
245	187	288	565	331	495
246	199	289	569	332	496
247	211	290	579	333	497

*The Satasai*

334	509	377	64	420	358
335	536	378	74	421	378
336	539	379	77	422	395
337	548	380	86	423	400
338	559	381	89	424	402
339	562	382	90	425	405
340	566	383	98	426	408
341	568	384	110	427	414
342	604	385	114	428	445
343	631	386	119	429	455
344	649	387	120	430	457
345	675	388	124	431	475
346	685	389	125	432	485
347	19	390	140	433	488
348	92	391	142	434	510
349	116	392	146	435	513
350	127	393	148	436	516
351	135	394	150	437	519
352	138	395	163	438	521
353	145	396	164	439	525
354	149	397	170	440	526
355	176	398	172	441	529
356	231	399	175	442	535
357	253	400	203	443	537
358	254	401	217	444	549
359	459	402	222	445	553
360	469	403	223	446	563
361	486	404	225	447	585
362	544	405	230	448	593
363	560	406	234	449	595
364	578	407	244	450	596
365	656	408	266	451	615
366	684	409	275	452	622
367	704	410	277	453	625
368	37	411	278	454	635
369	39	412	283	455	659
370	48	413	284	456	660
371	54	414	285	457	667
372	56	415	298	458	669
373	57	416	308	459	672
374	60	417	317	460	681
375	62	418	328	461	703
376	63	419	329	462	2

# Appendix

463	3	506	204	549	403
464	4	507	209	550	413
465	6	508	210	551	418
466	7	509	220	552	419
467	8	510	229	553	420
468	13	511	236	554	440
469	16	512	248	555	442
470	17	513	252	556	448
471	25	514	258	557	462
472	26	515	268	558	473
473	28	516	269	559	477
474	35	517	270	560	478
475	40	518	271	561	483
476	42	519	274	562	487
477	43	520	288	563	490
478	44	521	295	564	504
479	46	522	299	565	512
480	52	523	304	566	532
481	53	524	306	567	538
482	55	525	312	568	556
483	67	526	318	569	567
484	69	527	322	570	573
485	70	528	326	571	576
486	73	529	327	572	580
487	87	530	330	573	597
488	93	531	333	574	603
489	95	532	334	575	614
490	102	533	335	576	626
491	103	534	338	577	628
492	104	535	340	578	629
493	105	536	342	579	647
494	106	537	347	580	648
495	109	538	350	581	664
496	112	539	353	582	666
497	133	540	355	583	670
498	143	541	359	584	673
499	152	542	362	585	674
500	165	543	385	586	679
501	173	544	388	587	680
502	180	545	389	588	682
503	188	546	390	589	686
504	189	547	392	590	687
505	190	548	398	591	689



*The Satasal*

592	690	633	434	674	261
593	691	634	435	675	301
594	693	635	437	676	361
595	694	636	438	677	371
596	695	637	439	678	391
597	699	638	441	679	401
598	708	639	451	680	425
599	59	640	461	681	426
600	94	641	474	682	427
601	111	642	481	683	428
602	117	643	491	684	471
603	131	644	584	685	501
604	151	645	590	686	541
605	191	646	619	687	561
606	192	647	620	688	581
607	228	648	624	689	621
608	235	649	637	690	641
609	237	650	668	691	661
610	255	651	671	692	701
611	276	652	676	693	80
612	282	653	694	694	156
613	303	654	1	695	167
614	311	655	11	696	226
615	313	656	20	697	300
616	321	657	21	698	710
617	331	658	31	699	711
618	341	659	41	700	712
619	351	660	51	701	713
620	357	661	61	702	171
621	366	662	68	703	251
622	367	663	71	704	344
623	376	664	81	705	345
624	377	665	91	706	433
625	381	666	101	707	479
626	396	667	141	708	489
627	411	668	161	709	492
628	421	669	181	710	506
629	429	670	201	711	575
630	430	671	221	712	588
631	431	672	238	713	692
632	432	673	341		





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